



HOUSE BILL 251: Disaster Response Funding/Nondiscrimination.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	March 26, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Hastings, Greene, Balkcom, Bell	Prepared by:	Susan Sitze
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 251 would modify the North Carolina Emergency Management Act by doing the following:*

- *Adding provisions prohibiting discrimination based on political affiliation or political speech.*
- *Adding a provision that no applicant for any State emergency assistance in the form of grants shall be required to provide any personal demographic information unless the information is necessary to award the grant or is otherwise required by law.*

CURRENT LAW: Article 1A of Chapter 166A contains the North Carolina Emergency Management Act, which contains General Statutes from G.S. 166A-19 to G.S. 166A-19.79.

G.S. 166A-19.1 provides the purposes of the Emergency Management Act, which sets forth the responsibilities of the Governor, State agencies, and local governments related to natural or man-made emergencies and directs them to do the following:

- Reduce vulnerability of people and property to damage, injury, and loss of life and property.
- Prepare for prompt and efficient rescue, care, and treatment of threatened or affected persons.
- Provide for the rapid and orderly rehabilitation of persons and restoration of property.
- Provide for cooperation and coordination of activities relating to emergency response and recovery between State agencies, local governments, and the federal government.

G.S. 166A-19.74, Nondiscrimination in emergency management, provides the following: "State and local governmental bodies and other organizations and personnel who carry out emergency management functions under the provisions of this Article are required to do so in an equitable and impartial manner. Such State and local governmental bodies, organizations, and personnel shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, or economic status in the distribution of supplies, the processing of applications, and other relief and assistance activities."

G.S. 166A-19.41, State emergency assistance funds, authorizes the Governor to make State funds available for emergency assistance for recovery from emergencies for which federal assistance is either not available or does not adequately meet the needs of citizens. The Governor is authorized to make emergency assistance in the form of grants available to individuals, families, and eligible entities if certain criteria are met.

BILL ANALYSIS:

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Section 1 would modify G.S. 166A-19.1 to add the following to the list of purposes of the Emergency Management Act: "Provide for disaster recovery assistance from both federal and State funding sources to all United States citizens and legal residents of North Carolina affected by states of emergency and disaster declarations free from discrimination on the basis of political affiliation or political speech."

Section 2 would create a new criminal offense, G.S. 166A-19.4, titled "Nondiscrimination in State disaster recovery assistance," which would be punishable as a Class I felony. This criminal offense would provide the following: "No United States citizen or legal resident shall be denied or discriminated against by the State or its agencies and employees for disaster recovery assistance on the basis of political affiliation or political speech."

Section 3 would modify G.S. 166A-19.41 to require that any State emergency assistance in the form of grants must be administered free from discrimination. Specifically, no applicant for any State emergency assistance in the form of grants may be required to provide any personal demographic information unless that information was necessary to award the grant or to otherwise comply with State or federal law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Section 2 would become effective December 1, 2025, and apply to offenses committed on or after that date. The remainder of the act would be effective when it becomes law.