



HOUSE BILL 997: Certify Reading of NC Constitution.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House State and Local Government. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	May 6, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Riddell, Turner, Scott, Brody	Prepared by:	Erika Churchill
Analysis of:	First Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 997 would require every member of the General Assembly, prior to taking the oath of office, to certify whether or not that member had read, listened to, or otherwise reviewed the contents of the North Carolina Constitution and the Constitution of the United States with the previous two years.*

CURRENT LAW: The North Carolina Constitution sets for the qualifications for elected office. Except as specified in the North Carolina Constitution, every qualified voter in North Carolina who is 21 years of age, is eligible for election by the people to office. A qualified voter is a resident of this State who eligible to vote in the district for which election is sought. Disqualified are felons whose rights of citizenship have not been restored. Article VI. For all members of the General Assembly, the North Carolina Constitution also requires that the individual has resided in the district for which election is sought for one year immediately preceding the election. Sec. 6 and Sec. 7 of Article II. For members the North Carolina Senate, individuals must also be at least 25 years of age and a resident of the State for at least two years. Sec. 5 of Article II.

The North Carolina Constitution requires every person elected or appointed to office take and subscribe an oath. Sec. 7 of Article VI. The North Carolina Constitution also specifies that each member of the General Assembly, before taking the seat, must take an oath or affirmation that the member will support the Constitution and laws of the United States and the Constitution of the State of North Carolina, and will faithfully discharge the duties of a member of the Senate or House of Representatives. Sec. 12 of Article II. To implement these requirements, G.S. 11-7 provides the language of the oath that each member of the General Assembly, and every person elected or appointed to hold any office of trust or profit in the State, must swear or affirm before taking office:

"I, _____, do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States; that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina, and to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said State, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, to the best of my knowledge and ability; so help me God."

The North Carolina Constitution provides that each chamber is the judge of the qualifications of its members. Sec. 20 of Article II. The North Carolina Courts have interpreted the North Carolina Constitutional provisions regarding eligibility for elected office as restricting the General Assembly's authority to add additional qualifications beyond what is contained in the North Carolina Constitution.

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BILL ANALYSIS: The bill would require every member of the General Assembly, prior to taking the oath of office, to certify whether or not that member has read, listened to, or otherwise reviewed a copy of the Constitutions of the United States and the State of North Carolina within the two years before taking the oath of office. This requirement would be for members elected or appointed.

The certification would be filed with the House Principal Clerk for Representatives and the Senate Principal Clerk for Senators.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2027.