SENATE BILL 311:
Utility Worker Protection Act.

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	**Date:**	March 26, 2025
Introduced by:	Sens. Britt, Craven, Blue	**Prepared by:**	Michael Johnston
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 311 would increase the punishment for committing an assault against a utility or communications worker to a Class 1 misdemeanor.*

CURRENT LAW & BILL ANALYSIS:

Under G.S. 14-33(a), it is a Class 2 misdemeanor for a person to commit a simple assault, a simple assault and battery, or participate in a simple affray. Under G.S. 14-33(b), it is a Class 1 misdemeanor to commit an assault and battery against a sports official while the sports official is discharging or attempting to discharge official duties at a sports event, unless the defendant's conduct is covered under another provision of law providing greater punishment.

Senate Bill 311 would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor to assault a utility or communications worker while the worker is (i) readily identifiable as a worker and (ii) discharging or attempting to discharge his or her duties, unless the defendant's conduct is covered under another provision of law providing greater punishment.

As used in this subdivision, "utility or communications worker" would be broadly defined to include any employee, agent, or contractor of an entity that provides electricity, natural gas, liquid petroleum, water, wastewater, telecommunications services, or internet access services. To be readily identifiable, the worker would need to be wearing, at the time of the assault, a uniform, hat, or other outerwear bearing the logo of the utility or communications company.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective December 1, 2025, and apply to offenses committed on or after that date. Prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this act would not be abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act would remain applicable to those prosecutions.