

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS35026-ML-45A

Short Title: Firearm Safe Storage Awareness Initiative. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Hanig, Britt, and Perry (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO LAUNCH A STATEWIDE FIREARM SAFE STORAGE AWARENESS INITIATIVE TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS AND TO FACILITATE THE DISTRIBUTION OF GUN LOCKS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Firearm Safe Storage Awareness Initiative. – The Department of Health and Human Services (Department), in collaboration with the Wildlife Resources Commission (Commission), shall launch a two-year statewide firearm safe storage awareness initiative to educate the public about the importance of the safe storage of firearms and to facilitate the distribution of gun locks. The initiative required under this section shall include the development of (i) the website and toolkit required under Section 2 of this act and (ii) the outreach process required under Section 3 of this act.

SECTION 2. Development of Website and Toolkit. – The Commission shall develop a website to provide information to the public about (i) the importance of the safe storage of a firearm, especially with respect to access by children and youth; (ii) methods for safely storing a firearm; (iii) contact information for obtaining free gun locks, if available; (iv) information on State laws related to the safe storage of firearms; (v) links to webpages for various resources related to firearm safety such as resources addressing domestic violence, hunter education, and suicide prevention; and (vi) access to a toolkit of information that local communities may use to launch firearm safe storage initiatives at the local level. The toolkit shall provide materials and resources that may be tailored to a community's needs and used for launching local education and awareness campaigns, events, and local groups focused on firearm safe storage and the distribution of free or discounted gun locks. The website and toolkit required under this section shall be developed by July 1, 2024.

SECTION 3. Development of State-Coordinated Outreach. – Upon development of the website and toolkit required under Section 2 of this act, the Department shall develop and implement an outreach process for disseminating the information and toolkit described in Section 2 of this act to the public and to local communities, as well as the provision of technical assistance to local communities to assist them in utilizing the toolkit to launch local initiatives.

SECTION 4. Use of Third-Party Entity. – The Department and Commission may contract with a third-party entity with relevant expertise related to public health and injury prevention to launch the firearm safe storage awareness initiative required under Section 1 of this act.

SECTION 5. Prohibition on Advocacy. – The firearm safe storage awareness initiative required under Section 1 of this act and any State funds used to launch and maintain the



1 initiative shall not be used to advocate, promote, or lobby for the creation of new or the revision
2 of existing laws regulating firearms. The firearm safe storage awareness initiative and any State
3 funds used to launch or maintain the initiative shall only be used for the purposes set forth in
4 Sections 2 through 4 of this act and only to explain and promote existing laws regulating firearms
5 and best practices for firearm storage and safety.

6 **SECTION 6.** Intent to Fund. – It is the intent of the General Assembly to appropriate
7 funds during the 2023-2024 fiscal year to be used to cover costs incurred from implementing the
8 provisions of this act.

9 **SECTION 7.** Report. – The Department of Health and Human Services, in
10 collaboration with the Wildlife Resources Commission, shall submit a report to the Joint
11 Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services detailing the progress in
12 meeting the requirements set forth in Section 1 of this act. The report required under this section
13 shall be submitted by September 1, 2024.

14 **SECTION 8.** Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.