

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE DRH80395-RBz-16* (4/15)

Short Title: Commerce ServiCenter. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives LaRoque, Church (Primary Sponsors); Allred, Bordsen, Daughtridg, Decker, Jones, Warner, and C. Wilson.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS SERVICE CENTER IN THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 SECTION 1. Article 10 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended
6 by adding a new Part to read:

7 "Part 20. Business Service Center.

8 "§ 143B-472.100. Business Service Center established.

9 (a) There is established within the Department of Commerce the Business
10 Service Center. The Business Service Center shall be a clearinghouse for State business
11 information and shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

12 (1) Provide the business community with an information resource center
13 that disseminates information on State resources available to them and
14 to respond to business inquiries about these services.

15 (2) Provide the public with an information resource center that
16 disseminates information regarding State statutory and regulatory
17 requirements to conduct business in the State, including authoritative
18 sources and procedures and referrals to contact persons within the
19 appropriate State agencies.

20 (2) Establish a program in which the Business Service Center works with
21 the small business community to identify problems in State
22 government related to unnecessary delays, inconsistencies between
23 regulatory agencies, and the inefficient and ineffective uses of State
24 resources.

25 (3) Implement and administer an automated system to track the number of
26 contacts or inquiries received each year, the nature of each contact or

1 inquiry, and the final resolution offered in response to each contact or
2 inquiry for the purpose of recommending legislative and
3 administrative revisions.

4 (4) Work with the business coordinator designated in each State agency
5 pursuant to G.S. 147-54.17 to determine the status of requests for
6 information or assistance and to resolve any disputes that may arise
7 between agencies and businesses regarding compliance with laws,
8 rules, or policies of the State or agency.

9 (5) Make recommendations to agencies and the General Assembly
10 regarding proposed policies, rules, or laws to improve the
11 dissemination of information to small businesses regarding statutory
12 and regulatory requirements and to improve licensing procedures
13 affecting business undertakings, including alternatives such as
14 eliminating, consolidating, simplifying, or expediting particular
15 licenses.

16 (b) The Business Service Center shall adopt rules and forms necessary to carry
17 out the purposes of this Part.

18 **"§ 143B-472.101. Confidentiality of requests.**

19 At the request of the person or applicant, the identity of the person or other entity
20 requesting assistance or information pursuant to this Part shall remain confidential and
21 shall not be disseminated to any State agency or person outside the Business Service
22 Center. This section does not apply where the health, safety, or welfare of the citizens of
23 the State is at risk. The Secretary shall adopt rules, including exceptions to the
24 confidentiality requirement, to implement this section.

25 **"§ 143B-472.102. Reporting requirements of the Secretary of Commerce.**

26 The Secretary may report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental
27 Operations on recommended legislative proposals or administrative revisions to
28 improve State government communications and relations with the public and to make
29 those communications and relations more effective and efficient."

30 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 147-54.17 reads as rewritten:

31 **"§ 147-54.17. ~~License coordinator~~Coordinator designated in all State agencies.**

32 (a) Each agency shall cooperate fully with the Office in providing information on
33 the ~~licenses-forms, licenses,~~ and regulatory requirements of the agency, in coordinating
34 conferences with applicants to clarify license and regulatory requirements, and in
35 developing a plan for an automated master application system.

36 (b) Each agency shall designate a business ~~license~~coordinator. The coordinator
37 shall have the following responsibilities:

38 (1) To provide to the Office the most recent application and supplemental
39 forms required for each license issued by the ~~agency,~~agency and for
40 conducting business under the regulatory authority of the agency, the
41 most recent information available on existing and proposed agency
42 rules, the most recent information on changes or proposed changes in
43 license requirements or agency rules and how those changes will affect

- 1 the business community, and agency publications that would be of aid
2 or interest to the business ~~community~~; community.
- 3 (2) To work with the Office in scheduling conferences for applicants as
4 provided under ~~G.S. 147-54.15~~; G.S. 147-54.15.
- 5 (3) To determine, upon request of an applicant or the Office, the status of
6 a license application or renewal, the reason for any delay in the license
7 review process, and the action needed to end the delay; and to notify
8 the applicant or Office, as appropriate, of those ~~findings~~; findings.
- 9 (4) To work with the Office or applicant, upon request, to resolve any
10 dispute that may arise between the agency and the applicant during the
11 review ~~pröeess~~; process.
- 12 (4a) To determine, upon the request of a business or the Business Service
13 Center of the Department of Commerce, the status of a request for
14 information or assistance regarding any requirements or actions of the
15 agency, the reason for any delay in the agency's response, and the
16 action needed to end the delay; and to notify the applicant or Business
17 Service Center, as appropriate, of those findings.
- 18 (4b) To work with the Business Service Center of the Department of
19 Commerce or business, upon request, to resolve any dispute that may
20 arise between the agency and business regarding the compliance with
21 laws, rules, or policies of the State or agency.
- 22 (5) To review agency regulatory and license requirements and to provide a
23 written report to the Office that identifies the regulatory and licensing
24 requirements that affect the business community; indicates which, if
25 any, requirements should be eliminated, modified, or consolidated with
26 other requirements; and explains the need for continuing those
27 requirements not recommended for elimination."
- 28 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.