

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE BILL 1443*

Short Title: Commerce ServiCenter. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives LaRoque, Church (Primary Sponsors); Allred, Bordsen, Daughtridge, Decker, Jones, Warner, C. Wilson, Bowie, Glazier, Goodwin, Gorman, Moore, Pate, and Steen.

Referred to: Commerce.

May 13, 2004

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A BUSINESS SERVICE CENTER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

"Part 20. Business Service Center.

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Implement and administer an automated system to track the number of contacts or inquiries received each year, the nature of each contact or inquiry, and the final resolution offered in response to each contact or

1 inquiry for the purpose of recommending legislative and
2 administrative revisions.

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

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

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

17 **"§ 143B-472.101. Confidentiality of requests.**

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

24 **"§ 143B-472.102. Reporting requirements of the Secretary of Commerce.**

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

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

30 **"§ 147-54.17. ~~License coordinator~~Coordinator designated in all State agencies.**

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

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

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

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

26 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.