

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

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HOUSE BILL 656

Short Title: MH Proceedings/No Restraint. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Earle, Bordsen, Lucas, Bryant (Primary Sponsors);  
M. Alexander, Bell, Brisson, Carney, Coates, Farmer-Butterfield, Fisher,  
Goforth, Harrison, Luebke, Mackey, Parmon, Pierce, Wainwright, and Wray.

Referred to: Judiciary II, if favorable, Mental Health Reform.

March 19, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO PROHIBIT RESTRAINT OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MINORS BEING  
TRANSPORTED TO OR DURING HEARINGS PURSUANT TO INVOLUNTARY  
COMMITMENT PROCEEDINGS, EXCEPT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 122C-251(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) ~~In~~ Except as otherwise provided in this subsection pertaining to respondents who are  
minors, in providing transportation to or from involuntary commitment hearings and  
proceedings as required by this section, the law-enforcement officer may use reasonable force  
to restrain the respondent if it appears necessary to protect himself, the respondent, or others. If  
the respondent is a minor, then the law-enforcement officer may not restrain the  
respondent-minor during transport to or from hearings and proceedings unless a district court  
judge finds that the restraints are reasonably necessary to maintain order, prevent the  
respondent-minor's escape, or provide for the safety of the respondent-minor. The judge shall  
hold a hearing and provide the respondent-minor and the respondent-minor's attorney or other  
individual appointed to represent the respondent-minor an opportunity to be heard to contest  
the use of restraints before the judge orders the use of restraints. If restraints are ordered, the  
judge shall make findings of fact specific to each individual respondent-minor in support of the  
order. No law-enforcement officer may be held criminally or civilly liable for assault, false  
imprisonment, or other torts or crimes on account of reasonable measures taken under the  
authority of this Article."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 122C-267(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The respondent shall be present at the hearing. A subpoena may be issued to compel  
the respondent's presence at a hearing. The petitioner and the proposed outpatient treatment  
physician or his designee may be present and may provide testimony. If the respondent is a  
minor, the respondent-minor may not be restrained unless the judge finds that the restraints are  
reasonably necessary to maintain order, prevent the respondent-minor's escape, or provide for  
the safety of the respondent-minor. The judge shall hold a hearing and provide the  
respondent-minor and the respondent-minor's attorney or other individual appointed to  
represent the respondent-minor an opportunity to be heard to contest the use of restraints before  
the judge orders the use of restraints. If restraints are ordered, the judge shall make findings of  
fact specific to each individual respondent-minor in support of the order."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 122C-268(g) reads as rewritten:

"(g) Hearings may be held in an appropriate room not used for treatment of clients at the  
facility in which the respondent is being treated if it is located within the judge's district court



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1 district as defined in G.S. 7A-133 or in the judge's chambers. A hearing may not be held in a  
2 regular courtroom, over objection of the respondent, if in the discretion of a judge a more  
3 suitable place is available. If the respondent is a minor and is present at the hearing, the  
4 respondent-minor may not be restrained unless the judge finds that the restraints are reasonably  
5 necessary to maintain order, prevent the respondent-minor's escape, or provide for the safety of  
6 the respondent-minor. The judge shall hold a hearing and provide the respondent-minor and the  
7 respondent-minor's attorney or other individual appointed to represent the respondent-minor an  
8 opportunity to be heard to contest the use of restraints before the judge orders the use of  
9 restraints. If restraints are ordered, the judge shall make findings of fact specific to each  
10 individual respondent-minor in support of the order."

11           **SECTION 4.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to the  
12 transportation of and proceedings involving respondent-minors under Part 6 of Article 5 of  
13 Chapter 122C of the General Statutes occurring on and after that date.