

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 779  
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/20/11

Short Title: Electronic Recording/Custodial Interrogations.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 7, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW REGARDING ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF  
3 CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 15A-211 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 15A-211. Electronic recording of interrogations.**

7 (a) Purpose. – The purpose of this Article is to require the creation of an electronic  
8 record of an entire custodial interrogation in order to eliminate disputes about interrogations,  
9 thereby improving prosecution of the guilty while affording protection to the innocent and  
10 increasing court efficiency.

11 (b) Application. – The provisions of this Article shall ~~only~~ apply to all custodial  
12 interrogations of juveniles in homicide-criminal investigations conducted at any place of  
13 detention. The provisions of this Article shall also apply to any custodial  
14 interrogation of any person in a criminal investigation conducted at any place of detention if the  
15 investigation is related to any of the following crimes: any Class A, B1, or B2 felony, and any  
16 Class C felony of rape, sex offense, or assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting  
17 serious injury.

18 (c) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

19 (1) Electronic recording. – An audio recording that is an authentic, accurate,  
20 unaltered record; or a visual recording that is an authentic, accurate,  
21 unaltered record.

22 (2) In its entirety. – An uninterrupted record that begins with and includes a law  
23 enforcement officer's advice to the person in custody of that person's  
24 constitutional rights, ends when the interview has completely finished, and  
25 clearly shows both the interrogator and the person in custody throughout. If  
26 the record is a visual recording, the camera recording the custodial  
27 interrogation must be placed so that the camera films both the interrogator  
28 and the suspect. Brief periods of recess, upon request by the person in  
29 custody or the law enforcement officer, do not constitute an "interruption"  
30 of the record. The record will reflect the starting time of the recess and the  
31 resumption of the interrogation.

32 (3) Place of detention. – A jail, police or sheriff's station, correctional or  
33 detention facility, holding facility for prisoners, or other facility where  
34 persons are held in custody in connection with criminal charges.

35 (d) Electronic Recording of Interrogations Required. – Any law enforcement officer  
36 conducting a custodial interrogation in ~~a homicide~~ an investigation of a juvenile shall make an  
37 electronic recording of the interrogation in its entirety. Any law enforcement officer conducting



1 a custodial interrogation in an investigation relating to any of the following crimes shall make  
2 an electronic recording of the interrogation in its entirety: any Class A, B1, or B2 felony; and  
3 any Class C felony of rape, sex offense, or assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill  
4 inflicting serious injury.

5 (e) Admissibility of Electronic Recordings. – During the prosecution of any  
6 ~~homicide offense to which this Article applies~~, an oral, written, nonverbal, or sign language  
7 statement of a defendant made in the course of a custodial interrogation may be presented as  
8 evidence against the defendant if an electronic recording was made of the custodial  
9 interrogation in its entirety and the statement is otherwise admissible. If the court finds that the  
10 defendant was subjected to a custodial interrogation that was not electronically recorded in its  
11 entirety, any statements made by the defendant after that non-electronically recorded custodial  
12 interrogation, even if made during an interrogation that is otherwise in compliance with this  
13 section, may be questioned with regard to the voluntariness and reliability of the statement. The  
14 State may establish through clear and convincing evidence that the statement was both  
15 voluntary and reliable and that law enforcement officers had good cause for failing to  
16 electronically record the interrogation in its entirety. Good cause shall include, but not be  
17 limited to, the following:

- 18 (1) The accused refused to have the interrogation electronically recorded, and  
19 the refusal itself was electronically recorded.
- 20 (2) The failure to electronically record an interrogation in its entirety was the  
21 result of unforeseeable equipment failure, and obtaining replacement  
22 equipment was not feasible.

23 (f) Remedies for Compliance or Noncompliance. – All of the following remedies shall  
24 be granted as relief for compliance or noncompliance with the requirements of this section:

- 25 (1) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this section shall be  
26 considered by the court in adjudicating motions to suppress a statement of  
27 the defendant made during or after a custodial interrogation.
- 28 (2) Failure to comply with any of the requirements of this section shall be  
29 admissible in support of claims that the defendant's statement was  
30 involuntary or is unreliable, provided the evidence is otherwise admissible.
- 31 (3) When evidence of compliance or noncompliance with the requirements of  
32 this section has been presented at trial, the jury shall be instructed that it may  
33 consider credible evidence of compliance or noncompliance to determine  
34 whether the defendant's statement was voluntary and reliable.

35 (g) Article Does Not Preclude Admission of Certain Statements. – Nothing in this  
36 Article precludes the admission of any of the following:

- 37 (1) A statement made by the accused in open court during trial, before a grand  
38 jury, or at a preliminary hearing.
- 39 (2) A spontaneous statement that is not made in response to a question.
- 40 (3) A statement made during arrest processing in response to a routine question.
- 41 (4) A statement made during a custodial interrogation that is conducted in  
42 another state by law enforcement officers of that state.
- 43 (5) A statement obtained by a federal law enforcement officer.
- 44 (6) A statement given at a time when the interrogators are unaware that the  
45 person is suspected of ~~a homicide~~ an offense to which this Article applies.
- 46 (7) A statement used only for impeachment purposes and not as substantive  
47 evidence.

48 (h) Destruction or Modification of Recording After Appeals Exhausted. – The State  
49 shall not destroy or alter any electronic recording of a custodial interrogation of a defendant  
50 convicted of any offense related to the interrogation until one year after the completion of all  
51 State and federal appeals of the conviction, including the exhaustion of any appeal of any

1 motion for appropriate relief or habeas corpus proceedings. Every electronic recording should  
2 be clearly identified and catalogued by law enforcement personnel."

3 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2011, and applies to  
4 interrogations occurring on or after that date.