

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE DRH70110-LR-6 (1/30)

Short Title: Living Income Study Commission.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Adams.

Referred to:

1
2 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
3 AN ACT CREATING THE LIVING INCOME STUDY COMMISSION AND
4 APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.(a)** There is created the Living Income Study Commission
7 ("Commission"). The Commission shall consist of 21 members appointed as follows:

8 (1) Seven members appointed by the Governor, to include:

- 9 a. One person who is knowledgeable about unemployment
10 insurance laws.
11 b. One person who is knowledgeable about State and federal labor
12 laws.
13 c. One person who is knowledgeable about State and federal
14 taxes.
15 d. One person who represents an organization whose primary
16 purpose is to represent the interests of women.
17 e. One person who represents an organization whose primary
18 purpose is to represent the interests of Asian-Americans.
19 f. One person who represents an organization whose primary
20 purpose is to represent the interests of the American Indian
21 community.
22 g. One person who is knowledgeable about the State's public
23 education system.

24 (2) Seven members appointed by the Speaker of the House of
25 Representatives, to include:

- 26 a. Four members of the House of Representatives.

- 1 b. One person who is a working citizen of low to moderate
2 income.
3 c. One person who represents an organization whose primary
4 purpose is to represent the interests of African-American
5 citizens.
6 d. One person from a private business or firm employing 200 or
7 more employees in this State.
8 (3) Seven members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate,
9 to include:
10 a. Four members of the Senate.
11 b. One person who represents an organization whose primary
12 purpose is to represent the interests of workers.
13 c. One person who represents an organization whose primary
14 purpose is to represent the interests of the Latino and Hispanic
15 community.
16 d. One person from a private business or firm employing fewer
17 than 200 employees in this State.

18 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Commission shall do the following:

- 19 (1) Identify a basic needs budget for North Carolina families and
20 determine the income, hereinafter the "Living Income", and hourly
21 wage needed to support the basic needs budget.
22 (2) Determine the extent to which current labor market participation and
23 wages enable individuals and families to earn a Living Income
24 necessary to meet their basic needs.
25 (3) Determine how many North Carolinians work and earn a Living
26 Income as defined in subdivision (1) of this subsection and how many
27 work and earn wages below two hundred percent (200%) of the
28 Federal Poverty Guideline, and study trends in the size, geographic,
29 and demographic profiles of these groups. To the extent possible, this
30 should be done at the county level and demographic profiles should
31 include, but shall not be limited to, gender, race, country of origin,
32 education level, and age.
33 (4) Examine job market factors that contribute to any changes in the
34 composition and numbers of those working but unable to meet their
35 basic needs including, but not limited to, shifts from manufacturing to
36 service, from full-time to part-time work, from permanent to
37 temporary or other contingent employment, and geographic location of
38 economic development.
39 (5) Examine cost-of-living factors that contribute to changes in the
40 number of those working but unable to meet their basic needs
41 including, but not limited to, child care, housing, health care, and
42 utility costs.
43 (6) Examine the efficacy of current and proposed economic development
44 efforts (especially tax incentives) and other public and private

- 1 initiatives that could increase household income to an amount adequate
2 to support the household.
- 3 (7) Evaluate the effectiveness of the unemployment insurance system in
4 meeting the needs of low-wage workers when they become
5 unemployed.
- 6 (8) Evaluate the effectiveness of the public school system to educate
7 students about budgeting and economic literacy skills and about their
8 role as consumers and workers in contemporary society.
- 9 (9) Examine the efficacy of a State-earned income tax credit to enable
10 working families to meet the requirements of a basic needs budget.
- 11 (10) Examine the wages, benefits, and protections available to part-time
12 and temporary workers, leased employees, independent contractors,
13 and other contingent workers as compared to regular full-time
14 workers.
- 15 (11) Examine the number, household structure, and demographics of
16 workers earning close to the federal minimum wage, the economic
17 effects in North Carolina of the past increases in the federal minimum
18 wage, and economic effects in other states that have implemented
19 minimum wages higher than the federal minimum, including, but not
20 limited to, the impact on public assistance payments, competitiveness
21 of employers, and other employee benefits.
- 22 (12) Conduct public hearings around the State to solicit first-hand
23 testimony regarding Living Income issues.
- 24 (13) Consider any other matter that the Commission finds relevant to its
25 charge.

26 **SECTION 2.(a)** The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
27 President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall each appoint a cochair for the Commission.
28 The Commission may contract for consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.
29 Upon approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services Officer
30 shall assign professional and clerical staff to assist in the work of the Commission.
31 Clerical staff shall be furnished to the Commission through the offices of the House of
32 Representatives and Senate Supervisors of Clerks. The Commission may meet in the
33 Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building upon the approval of the
34 Legislative Services Commission. The Commission, while in discharge of official
35 duties, may exercise all the powers provided under the provisions of G.S. 120-19
36 through G.S. 120-19.4, including the power to request all officers, agents, agencies, and
37 departments of the State to provide any information, data, or documents within their
38 possession, ascertainable from their records, or otherwise available to them, and the
39 power to subpoena witnesses. Members of the Commission shall receive per diem,
40 subsistence, and travel allowances at the rate established in G.S. 120-3.1. Vacancies
41 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

42 **SECTION 2.(b)** The Commission shall submit an interim report to the 2004
43 Regular Session of the 2003 General Assembly that contains its recommendations,

1 legislative proposals, and cost analyses. The Commission shall make a final report to
2 the 2005 General Assembly and shall terminate upon filing its final report.

3 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General
4 Assembly the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for the 2003-2004 fiscal year and
5 the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for the 2004-2005 fiscal year for the costs of
6 the work of the Living Income Study Commission, created in Section 1 of this act.

7 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2003.