

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

**HOUSE BILL 915
RATIFIED BILL**

AN ACT ENCOURAGING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA TO OFFER AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE FOR CREDIT AS A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

Whereas, American Sign Language is a fully developed, autonomous, natural language with a unique grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and cultural heritage; and

Whereas, the gestures, visual components, and structures of American Sign Language are neither derived from English nor a simplified version of English; and

Whereas, American Sign Language is the predominant language most commonly used by the deaf community in the United States; and

Whereas, there is increasing acceptance of American Sign Language as a foreign language taught in the public schools in the United States; and

Whereas, 33 states currently have legislation recognizing American Sign Language as a foreign language; and

Whereas, there is an increased acceptance of American Sign Language as a foreign language among foreign language faculty at colleges and universities; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115C-81.3. Instruction in American Sign Language.

(a) The State Board of Education shall encourage schools to offer American Sign Language classes in high schools as a modern foreign language.

(b) The State Board of Education shall adopt and implement standards for the certification of teachers of American Sign Language and shall set standards for teacher preparation programs that prepare students for certification as American Sign Language teachers."

SECTION 1.(b) The State Board of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 1, 2007, on the implementation of this section.

SECTION 2.(a) Chapter 115D-5 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(r) The State Board of Community Colleges shall develop curriculum and continuing education standards for courses of instruction in American Sign Language and shall encourage community colleges to offer courses in American Sign Language as a modern foreign language."

SECTION 2.(b) The State Board of Community Colleges shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 1, 2007, on the implementation of this section.

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 116-11 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"§ 116-11. Powers and duties generally.

The powers and duties of the Board of Governors shall include the following:

...

(4b) The Board of Governors shall encourage the constituent institutions to offer courses in American Sign Language as a modern foreign language."

SECTION 3.(b) The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 1, 2007, on the implementation of this section.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 25th day of June, 2007.

Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

Joe Hackney
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved _____ .m. this _____ day of _____, 2007