

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 1991

CHAPTER 983  
SENATE BILL 1105

AN ACT TO DECREASE STATE EXPENDITURES FOR SAFEKEEPERS BY CLARIFYING THE LAW REGARDING THE MEDICAL COSTS OF SAFEKEEPERS AND BY CHANGING THE LAW REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF SAFEKEEPERS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 162-39 reads as rewritten:

"§ 162-39. **Transfer of prisoners when necessary for safety and security; application of section to municipalities.**

(a) Whenever necessary for the safety of a prisoner held in any county jail or to avoid a breach of the peace in any county or whenever prisoners are arrested in such numbers that county jail facilities are insufficient and inadequate for the housing of such prisoners, the resident judge of the superior court or any judge holding superior court in the district or any district court judge may order the prisoner transferred to a fit and secure jail in some other county, ~~or to a unit of the State prison system designated by the Secretary of Correction or his authorized representative,~~ county where the prisoner shall be held for such length of time as the judge may direct.

(b) Whenever necessary to avoid a security risk in any county jail, or whenever prisoners are arrested in such numbers that county jail facilities are insufficient and inadequate for the housing of such prisoners, the resident judge of the superior court or any judge holding superior court in the district or any district court judge may order the prisoner transferred to a unit of the State prison system designated by the Secretary of Correction or his authorized representative. For purposes of this subsection, a prisoner poses a security risk if the prisoner:

- (1) Poses a serious escape risk;
- (2) Exhibits violently aggressive behavior that cannot be contained and warrants a higher level of supervision;
- (3) Needs to be protected from other inmates, and the county jail facility cannot provide such protection;
- (4) Is a female or a person 18 years of age or younger, and the county jail facility does not have adequate housing for such prisoners;
- (5) Is in custody at a time when a fire or other catastrophic event has caused the county jail facility to cease or curtail operations; or
- (6) Otherwise poses an imminent danger to the staff of the county jail facility or to other prisoners in the facility.

(c) The sheriff of the county from which the prisoner is removed shall be responsible for conveying the prisoner to the jail or prison unit where he is to be held, and for returning him to the common jail of the county from which he was transferred. The return shall be made at the expiration of the time designated in the court order directing the transfer unless the judge, by appropriate order, shall direct otherwise. The sheriff or keeper of the jail of the county designated in the court order, or the officer in charge of the prison unit designated by the Secretary of Correction, shall receive and release custody of the prisoner in accordance with the terms of the court order. If a prisoner is transferred to a unit of the State prison system, the county from which the prisoner is transferred shall pay the Department of Correction for maintaining the prisoner for the time designated by the court at the per day, per inmate rate at which the Department of Correction pays a local jail for maintaining a ~~prisoner~~, prisoner. The county shall also pay the Department of Correction for the costs of extraordinary medical care incurred while the prisoner was in the custody of the Department of Correction, defined as follows:

- (1) Medical expenses incurred as a result of providing health care to a prisoner as an inpatient (hospitalized);
- (2) Other medical expenses when the total cost exceeds thirty-five dollars (\$35.00) per occurrence or illness as a result of providing health care to a prisoner as an outpatient (nonhospitalized); and
- (3) Cost of replacement of eyeglasses and dental prosthetic devices if those eyeglasses or devices are broken while the prisoner is incarcerated, provided the prisoner was using the eyeglasses or devices at the time of his commitment and then only if prior written consent of the county is obtained by the Department.

~~provided, however, that~~ However, a county is not required to reimburse the State for maintaining a prisoner who was a resident of another state or county at the time he committed the crime for which he is imprisoned. If the prisoner is transferred to a jail in some other county, the county from which the prisoner is transferred shall pay to the county receiving the prisoner in its jail the actual cost of maintaining the prisoner for the time designated by the court. Counties are hereby authorized to enter into contractual agreements with other counties to provide jail facilities to which prisoners may be transferred as deemed necessary under this section.

Whenever prisoners are arrested in such numbers that county jail facilities are insufficient and inadequate for the safekeeping of such prisoners, the resident judge of the superior court or any superior or district court judge holding court in the district may order the prisoners transferred to a unit of the State Department of Correction designated by the Secretary of Correction or his authorized representative, where the prisoners may be held for such length of time as the judge may direct, such detention to be in cell separate from that used for imprisonment of persons already convicted of crimes, except when admission to an inpatient prison medical or mental health unit is required to provide services deemed necessary by a prison health care clinician. The sheriff of the county from which the prisoners are removed shall be responsible for conveying the prisoners to the prison unit or units where they are to be held, and for

returning them to the common jail of the county from which they were transferred. However, if due to the number of prisoners to be conveyed the sheriff is unable to provide adequate transportation, he may request the assistance of the Department of Correction, and the Department of Correction is hereby authorized and directed to cooperate with the sheriff and provide whatever assistance is available, both in vehicles and manpower, to accomplish the conveying of the prisoners to and from the county to the designated prison unit or units. The officer in charge of the prison unit designated by the Secretary of Correction or his authorized representative shall receive and release the custody of the prisoners in accordance with the terms of the court order. The county from which the prisoners are transferred shall pay to the Department of Correction the actual cost of transporting the prisoners and the cost of maintaining the prisoners at the per day, per inmate rate at which the Department of Correction pays a local jail for maintaining a prisoner, provided, however, that a county is not required to reimburse the State for transporting or maintaining a prisoner who was a resident of another state or county at the time he was arrested. However, if the county commissioners shall certify to the Governor that the county is unable to pay the bill submitted by the State Department of Correction to the county for the services rendered, either in whole or in part, the Governor may recommend to the Council of State that the State of North Carolina assume and pay, in whole or in part, the obligation of the county to the Department of Correction, and upon approval of the Council of State the amount so approved shall be paid from Contingency and Emergency Fund to the Department of Correction.

When, due to an emergency, it is not feasible to obtain from a judge of the superior or district court a prior order of transfer, the sheriff of the county and the Department of Correction may exercise the authority hereinafter conferred; provided, however, that the sheriff shall, as soon as possible after the emergency, obtain an order from the judge authorizing the prisoners to be held in the designated place of confinement for such period as the judge may direct. All provisions of this ~~section~~ subsection shall be applicable to municipalities whenever prisoners are arrested in such numbers that the municipal jail facilities and the county jail facilities are insufficient and inadequate for the safekeeping of the prisoners. The chief of police is hereby authorized to exercise the authority herein conferred upon the sheriff, and the municipality shall be liable for the cost of transporting and maintaining the prisoners to the same extent as a county would be unless action is taken by the Governor and Council of State as herein provided for counties which are unable to pay such costs.

(d) Whenever a prisoner held in a county jail requires medical or mental health treatment that the county decides can best be provided by the Department of Correction, the resident judge of the superior court or any judge holding superior court in the district or any district court judge may order the prisoner transferred to a unit of the State prison system designated by the Secretary of Correction or his authorized representative. The sheriff of the county from which the prisoner is removed shall be responsible for conveying the prisoner to the prison unit where he is to be held, and for returning him to the jail of the county from which he was transferred. The prisoner shall be returned when the attending medical or mental health professional determines that the prisoner

may be returned safely. The officer in charge of the prison unit designated by the Secretary of Correction shall receive custody of the prisoner in accordance with the terms of the order and shall release custody of the prisoner in accordance with the instructions of the attending medical or mental health professional. The county from which the prisoner is transferred shall pay the Department of Correction for maintaining the prisoner for the period of treatment at the per day, per inmate rate at which the Department of Correction pays a local jail for maintaining a prisoner, and for extraordinary medical expenses as set forth in subsection (c) of this section.

(e) The number of county prisoners incarcerated in the State prison system pursuant to safekeeping orders from the various counties pursuant to subsection (b) of this section or for medical or mental health treatment pursuant to subsection (d) of this section may not exceed 200 at any given time unless authorized by the Secretary of Correction. The Secretary may refuse to accept any safekeeper and may return any safekeeper transferred under a safekeeping order when this capacity limit is reached."

Sec. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, counties shall not be liable for extraordinary medical expenses of safekeepers incurred prior to the effective date of this act; however, no county that has reimbursed the Department of Correction for extraordinary medical expenses of safekeepers prior to the effective date of this act has the right to a refund or credit for such payment.

Sec. 3. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 20th day of July, 1992.

Henson P. Barnes  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.  
Speaker of the House of Representatives