

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

**SESSION LAW 2003-211
HOUSE BILL 483**

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ABROGATION OF OFFENSIVE PLACE-NAMES
THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 4 of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 147-54.7. Abrogation of offensive geographical place-names.

(a) The General Assembly finds that certain geographical place-names are offensive or insulting to the State's people, history, and heritage. These place-names should be replaced by names that reflect the State's people, history, and heritage without resorting to offensive stereotypes, names, words, or phrases.

(b) The Secretary of State, in consultation with the North Carolina Geographic Information Coordinating Council, and pursuant to federal guidelines, shall adopt procedures to effect the change of geographical place-names that are offensive or insulting. The procedures shall include a notification to the governing body of the county where the offensive or insulting place-name is deemed to exist that the Council intends to make application to change the name. The county governing body shall have 90 days in which to respond to the Council, and no action to affect a change in the place-name shall be undertaken by the Council until it has reviewed the county's response, or the expiration of the 90-day period, whichever comes first.

(c) The procedures adopted by the Secretary pursuant to this section shall include the consideration of resolutions, if any, passed by the governing body of any county regarding the changing of a geographical place-name within the county."

SECTION 2. The geographical place or location names in the State that contain the word "Nigger" are deemed to be an offensive and insulting place or location name. The North Carolina Geographic Coordinating Council shall notify the governing body of the county where there are geographic places or locations which contain the foregoing term that (i) application will be made to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to change the offensive name, and (ii) that the county governing body has 90 days in which to forward a suggested replacement name to the Council. If the county's recommended replacement name is not deemed to be offensive or insulting by vote of the Council, then the Council shall make application to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to change the offensive place-name to the name provided by the county governing body. If the county governing body fails to provide a replacement name within the specified time, or the provided name is deemed to be offensive or insulting by vote of the Council, then the Council shall make the application to change the offensive place-name to a name chosen within its discretion.

SECTION 3. This act shall not be construed to apply to a geographic place-name which is that of a historic person or event or to a nonpejorative place-name.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 11th day of
June, 2003.

s/ Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved 12:44 p.m. this 19th day of June, 2003