

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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SENATE BILL 617

Short Title: Repeal Involuntary Sterilization.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lucas; Dannelly, Dorsett, Holloman, Kinnaird, and Malone.

Referred to: Health & Human Resources.

March 31, 2003

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REPEAL THE LAW THAT AUTHORIZES THE INVOLUNTARY
STERILIZATION OF PERSONS WHO ARE MENTALLY ILL OR MENTALLY
RETARDED, TO PERMIT THE STERILIZATION OF MENTALLY ILL OR
MENTALLY RETARDED WARDS ONLY WHEN THERE IS A MEDICAL
NECESSITY, AND TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES TO THE GENERAL
STATUTES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. REPEALS THE LAW AUTHORIZING INVOLUNTARY
STERILIZATIONS AND PERMITS THE STERILIZATION OF MENTALLY
ILL OR MENTALLY RETARDED WARDS ONLY WHEN THERE IS A
MEDICAL NECESSITY.**

SECTION 1. Article 7 of Chapter 35 of the General Statutes is repealed.

SECTION 1.(a) Article 8 of Chapter 35A is amended by adding a new
section to read:

**"§ 35A-1245. Procedure to permit the sterilization of a mentally ill or a mentally
retarded ward in the case of medical necessity.**

**(a) A guardian of the person shall not consent to the sterilization of a mentally ill
or mentally retarded ward unless an order from the clerk has been obtained in
accordance with this section.**

**(b) If a mentally ill or mentally retarded ward needs to undergo a medical
procedure that would result in sterilization, the ward's guardian shall petition the clerk
for an order to permit the guardian to consent to the procedure. The petition shall
contain the following:**

**(1) A sworn statement from a physician licensed in this State who has
examined the ward that the proposed procedure is medically necessary
and not for the sole purpose of sterilization or for the purpose of
hygiene or convenience.**

- 1 (2) The name and address of the physician who will perform the
2 procedure.
- 3 (3) A sworn statement from a psychiatrist or psychologist licensed in this
4 State who has examined the ward as to whether the mentally ill or
5 mentally retarded ward is able to comprehend the nature of the
6 proposed procedure and its consequences and provide an informed
7 consent to the procedure.
- 8 (4) If the ward is able to comprehend the nature of the proposed procedure
9 and its consequences, the sworn consent of the ward to the procedure.
- 10 (c) A copy of the petition shall be served on the ward personally. If the ward is
11 unable to comprehend the nature of the proposed procedure and its consequences and is
12 unable to provide an informed consent, the clerk shall appoint an attorney to represent
13 the ward.
- 14 (d) Should the ward or the ward's attorney request a hearing, a hearing shall be
15 held. Otherwise, the clerk may enter an order without the appearance of witnesses. If a
16 hearing is held, the guardian and the ward may present evidence.
- 17 (e) If the clerk finds the following, the clerk shall enter an order permitting the
18 guardian to consent to the proposed procedure:
- 19 (1) The ward is capable of comprehending the procedure and its
20 consequences and has consented to the procedure, or the ward is
21 unable to comprehend the procedure and its consequences.
- 22 (2) The procedure is medically necessary and is not solely for the purpose
23 of sterilization or for hygiene or convenience.
- 24 (f) The guardian or the ward, the ward's attorney, or any other interested party
25 may appeal the clerk's order to the superior court in accordance with G.S. 1-301.2(e)."

26 **PART II. CONFORMING CHANGES TO THE GENERAL STATUTES.**

27 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 1-301.2(g) reads as rewritten:

- 28 "(g) Exception for Incompetency and Foreclosure ~~Proceedings.~~Proceedings and
29 Proceedings to Permit Sterilization for Medical Necessity. –
- 30 (1) Proceedings for adjudication of incompetency or restoration of
31 competency under Chapter 35A of the General Statutes Statutes, or
32 proceedings to determine whether a guardian may consent to the
33 sterilization of a mentally ill or mentally retarded ward under G.S.
34 35A-1245, shall not be transferred even if an issue of fact, an equitable
35 defense, or a request for equitable relief is raised. Appeals from orders
36 entered in these proceedings are governed by Chapter 35A to the
37 extent that the provisions of that Chapter conflict with this section.
- 38 (2) Foreclosure proceedings under Article 2A of Chapter 45 of the
39 General Statutes shall not be transferred even if an issue of fact, an
40 equitable defense, or a request for equitable relief is raised. Equitable
41 issues may be raised only as provided in G.S. 45-21.34. Appeals from
42 orders entered in these proceedings are governed by Article 2A of
43 Chapter 45 to the extent that the provisions of that Article conflict with
44 this section."

1 **SECTION 2.(a)** G.S. 7A-451(a)(10) is repealed.

2 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 35A-1203(e) reads as rewritten:

3 "(e) Where a guardian or trustee has been appointed for a ward under former
4 Chapter 33 or former Chapter 35 of the General Statutes, the clerk, upon his own
5 motion or the motion of that guardian or trustee or any other interested person, may
6 designate that guardian or trustee or appoint another qualified person as guardian of the
7 person, guardian of the estate, or general guardian of the ward under this Chapter;
8 provided, the authority of a guardian or trustee properly appointed under former Chapter
9 33 or former Chapter 35 of the General Statutes to continue serving in that capacity is
10 not dependent on such motion and designation."

11 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 35A-1241(a) reads as rewritten:

12 "(a) To the extent that it is not inconsistent with the terms of any order of the clerk
13 or any other court of competent jurisdiction, a guardian of the person has the following
14 powers and duties:

15 (1) The guardian of the person is entitled to custody of the person of ~~his~~the
16 guardian's ward and shall make provision for ~~his~~the ward's care,
17 comfort, and maintenance, and shall, as appropriate to the ward's
18 needs, arrange for ~~his~~ the ward's training, education, employment,
19 rehabilitation or habilitation. The guardian of the person shall take
20 reasonable care of the ward's clothing, furniture, vehicles, and other
21 personal effects that are with the ward.

22 (2) The guardian of the person may establish the ward's place of abode
23 within or without this State. In arranging for a place of abode, the
24 guardian of the person shall give preference to places within this State
25 over places not in this State if in-State and out-of-State places are
26 substantially equivalent. ~~He~~ The guardian also shall give preference to
27 places that are not treatment facilities. If the only available and
28 appropriate places of domicile are treatment facilities, ~~he~~the guardian
29 shall give preference to community-based treatment facilities, such as
30 group homes or nursing homes, over treatment facilities that are not
31 community-based.

32 (3) The guardian of the person may give any consent or approval that may
33 be necessary to enable the ward to receive medical, legal,
34 psychological, or other professional care, counsel, treatment, or
35 service. ~~He~~ The guardian ~~may shall~~ not, however, consent to the
36 sterilization of a mentally ill or mentally retarded ~~ward. Such~~
37 ~~sterilization may be performed only after compliance with Chapter 35,~~
38 ~~Article 7.~~ ward unless the guardian obtains an order from the clerk in
39 accordance with G.S. 35A-1245. The guardian of the person may give
40 any other consent or approval on the ward's behalf that may be
41 required or in the ward's best interest. ~~He~~The guardian may petition the
42 clerk for the clerk's concurrence in the consent or approval."

43 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 90-21.13(e) reads as rewritten:

1 "(e) In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this section and those of
2 ~~Article 7 of Chapter 35 and G.S. 35A-1245 and Articles 1A and 19 of Chapter 90, the~~
3 provisions of those Articles shall control and continue in full force and effect."

4 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 90-275 reads as rewritten:

5 "**§ 90-275. Article does not affect eugenical or therapeutical sterilization laws. duty**
6 **of guardian to obtain order permitting guardian to consent to**
7 **sterilization of a mentally ill or mentally retarded ward.**

8 Nothing in this Article shall be deemed to affect the provisions of ~~Article 7 of~~
9 ~~Chapter 35 of the General Statutes of North Carolina. G.S. 35A-1245."~~

10 **SECTION 7.** G.S. 108A-14(a)(10) is repealed.

11 **SECTION 8.** G.S. 148-22.2 reads as rewritten:

12 "**§ 148-22.2. Procedure when surgical operations on inmates are necessary.**

13 The medical staff of any penal institution of the State of North Carolina is hereby
14 authorized to perform or cause to be performed by competent and skillful surgeons
15 surgical operations upon any inmate when such operation is necessary for the
16 improvement of the physical condition of the inmate. The decision to perform ~~such an~~
17 operation shall be made by the chief medical officer of the institution, with the approval
18 of the superintendent of the institution, and with the advice of the medical staff of ~~said~~
19 ~~the~~ institution. No ~~such~~ operation shall be performed without the consent of the inmate;
20 or, if the inmate ~~be is~~ a minor, without the consent of a responsible member of ~~his the~~
21 ~~inmate's~~ family, a guardian, or one having legal custody of ~~such the~~ minor; or, if the
22 inmate be non compos mentis, then the consent of a responsible member of ~~his the~~
23 ~~inmate's~~ family or of a guardian ~~must shall~~ be obtained. Any surgical operations on
24 inmates of State penal institutions shall also be subject to the provisions of Article 1A of
25 Chapter 90 of the General Statutes and G.S. 90-21.13 and G.S. 90-21.14.

26 If the operation on the inmate is determined by the chief medical officer to be an
27 emergency situation in which immediate action is necessary to preserve the life or
28 health of the inmate, and the inmate, if sui juris, is unconscious or otherwise
29 incapacitated so as to be incapable of giving consent or in the case of a minor or inmate
30 non compos mentis, the consent of a responsible member of ~~his the~~ ~~inmate's~~ family,
31 guardian, or one having legal custody of ~~such the~~ inmate cannot be obtained within the
32 time necessitated by the nature of the emergency situation, then the decision to proceed
33 with the operation shall be made by the chief medical officer and the superintendent of
34 the institution with the advice of the medical staff of the institution.

35 In all cases falling under this Article [section], the chief medical officer of the
36 institution and the medical staff of the institution shall keep a careful and complete
37 record of the measures taken to obtain the permission for ~~such the~~ operation and a
38 complete medical record signed by the medical superintendent or director, the surgeon
39 performing the operation and all surgical consultants of the operation performed.

40 ~~This Article [section] is not to be considered as affecting the provisions of Article 7~~
41 ~~of Chapter 35 of the General Statutes dealing with eugenical sterilization."~~

42 **SECTION 9.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to all
43 petitions for sterilization pending and orders authorizing sterilization that have not been
44 executed as of the effective date of this act.