

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**Session 2017**

**Legislative Incarceration Fiscal Note**

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 230 (First Edition)

**SHORT TITLE:** Revised Uniform Athlete Agents Act.

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Davis

<b>FISCAL IMPACT</b>					
(\$ in millions)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Estimate Available					
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
<b>State Impact</b>					
General Fund Revenues:					
General Fund Expenditures					
State Positions:					
<b>NET STATE IMPACT</b>	<b>Likely budget cost. See Assumptions &amp; Methodology section for additional details.</b>				
<b>PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) &amp; PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED:</b>					
Administrative Office of the Courts; Indigent Defense Services; Department of Public Safety					
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> December 1, 2017					
<b>TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS:</b>					
None					

**FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY:**

The proposed bill may have a fiscal impact to address a new chargeable offense being enforced, adjudicated, and having penalties applied to those convicted of the new offense. However, given that there is no historical data on this new offense or similar offenses to use as a proxy for predicting the total number of new offenses, the Fiscal Research Division cannot reasonably estimate the total additional costs that may be incurred. The following costs may be incurred for every one person charged and convicted of this crime:

- Administrative Office of the Courts: \$170 to \$625 per disposition
- Indigent Defense Services: \$59 to \$392 per indigent defendant
- Department of Public Safety (DPS) - Prisons: \$5,027 per active sentence
- DPS - Community Corrections: Minimum of \$1,332

Please see the Assumptions and Methodology section for additional information.

**BILL SUMMARY:**

This bill repeals Article 9 of Chapter 78C, The Uniform Athlete Agents Act, and replaces it with Article 10 of Chapter 78C, the Revised Uniform Athlete Agents Act. In so doing, this bill changes the classification of an existing Class I felony into a Class H felony while expanding the scope of the offense, and creates two new offenses, one Class H felony and one Class 1 misdemeanor.

Currently, G.S. 78C-98(a), Prohibited conduct, provides that it shall be a Class I felony for any athlete agent, with the intent to induce a student athlete to enter into an agency contract, to: (1) give any materially false or misleading information or make a materially false promise or representation; (2) furnish anything of value to the student athlete before the student athlete enters into the agency contract; (3) furnish anything of value to any individual other than the student athlete or another registered athlete agent. This bill recodifies G.S. 78C-98(a) as G.S. 78C-124(a), Prohibited conduct, and reclassifies the offense as a Class H felony pursuant to G.S. 78C-125, Criminal penalties. The bill also expands the scope of the offense by expanding the definition of athlete agent, covered athlete to include former student athletes, and by expanding the prohibited conduct to include influencing the parents or guardians of a minor covered athlete, and encouraging others to act on behalf of the agent.

This bill also creates a new Class H felony. Proposed G.S. 78C-124(b) provides that, unless registered under Article 10, an athlete agent shall not intentionally (i) initiate contact, directly or indirectly, with a covered athlete or, if the covered athlete is a minor, a parent or guardian of the covered athlete to recruit or solicit the covered athlete, parent, or guardian to enter an agency contract or (ii) encourage any other individual to do so on behalf of the athlete agent. Pursuant to G.S. 78C-125, violation of this section is a Class H felony. Currently, G.S. 78C-98(b)(1) prohibits any athlete agent from intentionally initiating contact with a student athlete unless the student athlete is registered under Article 9 of Chapter 78C, but it is not a criminal offense.

Finally, this bill creates a new Class 1 misdemeanor. Proposed G.S. 78C-124(c) prohibits an athlete agent from intentionally: (2) failing to retain or permit inspection of the records required to be retained by G.S. 78C-123. (3) Failing to register as required by G.S. 78C-114. (4) Providing materially false or misleading information in an application for registration or renewal of registration. (5) Predating or postdating an agency contract. (6) Failing to notify a covered athlete, or if he is a minor, a parent or guardian of the covered athlete, before the covered athlete, parent, or guardian an agency contract for a particular sport that the signing may make the covered athlete ineligible to participate as a student athlete in that sport. Pursuant to G.S. 78C-125, violation of this section shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor. Currently, G.S. 78C-98(b) prohibits an athlete agent from carrying out much of the same conduct, but it is not a criminal offense.

## **ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:**

### **General**

The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission prepares prison population projections for each bill containing a criminal penalty. The Commission assumes for such bills that expanding existing or creating new criminal offenses produces no deterrent or incapacitative effect on crime. Therefore, the Fiscal Research Division does not assume deterrent effects for any criminal penalty bill.

S.L. 2011-192 (H.B. 642), the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA), made changes to North Carolina's court system, corrections system (both to prisons and probation), and to post-release supervision. All active sentences for felony offenses now result in a minimum of twelve months of post-release supervision (PRS) for B1-E level offenses and a minimum of nine months of PRS for F-I level offenses.

JRA also created the Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program (SMCP) for housing misdemeanants with sentences between 90 and 180 days in county jails (misdemeanants with shorter sentences were

already the responsibility of the counties). County participation in the program is voluntary. The SMCP pays participating counties for misdemeanants' housing, transportation, and medical costs. In 2014, the program was expanded to include all misdemeanants with sentences longer than 90 days. The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission does not track county jail capacity, so it is not possible to estimate the impact of new or increased misdemeanor penalties on county jails.

### **Judicial Branch**

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides Fiscal Research with a fiscal impact analysis for most criminal penalty bills. For such bills, fiscal impact is typically based on the assumption that court time will increase due to anticipated increases in trials and corresponding increases in workload for judges, clerks, and prosecutors. This increased court time is also expected to result in greater expenditures for jury fees and indigent defense.

The bill increases an existing Class I felony offense to a Class H felony offense, and creates a new Class H felony offense. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) does not have a specific offense code for violations of G.S. 78C-98(a). The lack of an AOC offense code is an indication that this offense is infrequently charged and/or infrequently results in convictions. AOC does not have historical data upon which to estimate the number of charges that might occur. AOC provides estimates of the average cost to the court for a charge by offense class. For every additional person charged with a Class H felony, the average cost to the court would be \$625. For those cases that would have been prosecuted under the Class I felony, the cost to the courts of increasing the charge class to a Class H felony offense would be \$170 per case (\$625 Class H felony cost minus \$455 Class I felony cost).

The Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS) has provided Fiscal Research with the frequency and cost of indigent defense services for each level of crime, including the cost differentials for district and superior court with and without a trial and the percentage of cases handled in each category. Fiscal Research used this data to calculate a weighted average of IDS costs. In FY 2011-12, the most recent year data is available, 78% of Class H felony cases were handled through IDS. The weighted average cost of a new Class H felony is \$392 per case for a private appointed counsel (PAC) attorney. For those cases that would have been prosecuted under the Class I felony, the cost to IDS of increasing the charge class to a Class H felony offense would be \$59 per case (\$392 Class H felony cost minus \$333 Class I felony cost). This estimate assumes the appointment of a PAC attorney. In districts that have Public Defender offices, cases may be handled by those offices. In those instances, this cost may not be incurred.

The bill also creates a new Class 1 misdemeanor. The cost to AOC for a Class 1 misdemeanor is \$206; the cost to IDS is \$202 per case.

### **Department of Public Safety – Prisons**

The chart below depicts the projected inmate population relative to available prison bed capacity system-wide. Capacity projections assume operation at Expanded Operating Capacity,<sup>1</sup> and represent the total number of beds in operation, or authorized for construction or operation as of December 2015.

Based on the most recent population projections and estimated bed capacity, there are surplus prison beds available for the five-year fiscal note horizon and beyond. Therefore, no additional beds will be required unless the projected number of additional inmates resulting from a bill (row four) exceeds the projected number of beds under the inmate population (row three).

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<sup>1</sup> Expanded Operating Capacity (EOC) is: 1) the number of single cells housing one inmate, 2) the number of single cells housing two inmates, and 3) the number of beds in dormitories, allowing between 35 (130% of Standard Operating Capacity) and 50 (SOC) square feet per inmate.

<b>Population Projections and Bed Capacity Five Year Impact</b>					
	<b>June 30 2018</b>	<b>June 30 2019</b>	<b>June 30 2020</b>	<b>June 30 2021</b>	<b>June 30 2022</b>
1. Inmates <sup>2</sup>	37,304	37,601	37,367	37,385	37,642
2. Prison Beds (Expanded Capacity)	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373
3. Beds Over/(Under) Inmate Population	1,069	772	1,006	988	731
<b>4. Additional Inmates Due to this Bill<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>No estimate available</b>				
<b>5. Additional Beds Required</b>					

Since the bill creates a new offense, the Sentencing Commission does not have any historical data from which to estimate the impact of this bill on the prison population. A threshold analysis is provided when it is not known how many offenders might be convicted and sentenced as a result of the proposed change. For each offense class, the threshold estimate is the number of convictions that result in the need for one prison bed in the first year.

In FY 2015-16, 35% of Class H felony convictions resulted in active sentences, with an average estimated time served of 11 months. Nine months of post-release supervision is required upon release from prison following an active sentence or revocation of probation. The following table shows the estimated annual bed impact if there were four convictions (the threshold) or 20 convictions for this proposed offense per year. The five year estimate takes into account the combination of active sentences and probation and post-release supervision violations resulting in confinement, as well as growth rates adopted by the Sentencing Commission's Forecasting Technical Advisory Group.

<b>Estimated Prison Bed Impact Using Threshold Convictions and 20 Convictions Class H Felony</b>					
<b>Convictions</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
4 (Threshold)	1	2	2	2	2
20	7	10	10	10	10

In addition to the capital costs that may be associated with additional bed needs, there are also per diem costs for housing inmates. The cost to add one additional inmate to the prison system is \$15.02 per day, or \$457 per month, which includes the cost of food, clothing, and health care. In FY 2015-16, 35% of Class H felony offenders received active sentences averaging 11 months. For every one Class H felony offender receiving an active sentence, the cost to the prison section will be \$5,027 (\$457 monthly cost times 11 months).

Although the bill creates a new Class 1 misdemeanor, that new penalty will not have an impact on the prison system. All misdemeanant active sentences are served in local jails.

<sup>2</sup> The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission prepares inmate population projections annually. These projections are derived from: historical information on incarceration and release rates under Structured Sentencing; crime rate forecasts by a technical advisory group; probation and offender revocation rates; and the decline (parole and max-outs) of the stock prison population sentenced under prior sentencing acts. Projections were updated in February 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Criminal penalty bills effective December 1, 2016 should not affect prison population and bed needs until FY 2017-18 due to the lag time between offense charge and sentencing - six months on average. No delayed effect is presumed for the Court System.

## **Department of Public Safety – Community Corrections**

All active sentences for felony offenses now result in a minimum of twelve months of post-release supervision (PRS) for B1-E level offenses and a minimum of nine months of PRS for F-I level offenses. Additionally, for felony offense classes F through I offenders may be given non-active (intermediate or community) sentences exclusively, or in conjunction with imprisonment (split-sentence). Sanctions include electronic house arrest, community service, substance abuse treatment, participation in educational or vocational skills development, payment of court costs, fines, and restitution, and short-term jail sentences not exceeding six days per month.

JRA essentially eliminated the distinction between “community” and “intermediate” supervision. Under structured sentencing, the two types of supervision were each defined by a set of specific sanctions. Under JRA, both community and intermediate probation may now include electronic monitoring, short-term periods of confinement, substance abuse assessment, monitoring, and treatment, participation in educational programs or vocational skills development. Whether a probationer is subject to more stringent conditions is determined by the results of a risk-needs assessment administered by the Department of Public Safety.

All types of post-release supervision are supervised by the Community Corrections Section (CCS); CCS also oversees community service. Supervision by a probation officer costs \$148 per offender, per month; no cost is assumed for those receiving unsupervised probation, or who are only ordered to pay fines, fees, or restitution. Total costs are based on average supervision length and the percentage of offenders (per offense class) sentenced to active sentences requiring post-release supervision and supervised probations.

In FY 2015-16, 35% of Class H felony offenders received active sentences. All active sentences for Class F through I felonies result in nine months of post-release supervision (PRS). The average length of probation imposed for this offense class was 27 months. Therefore, at a minimum, one conviction resulting from this bill will require at least nine months of supervision. The cost of nine months of supervision is \$1,332 per offender (\$148 per month times nine months).<sup>4</sup> For every offender sentenced to probation, the average cost would be \$3,996 (\$148 per month times 27 months).

The bill also creates a new Class 1 misdemeanor. In FY 2015-16, 31% of Class 1 misdemeanor offenders received active sentences; 69% received probation. Active misdemeanor sentences are served in local jails and do not require any post-release supervision. The average length of probation imposed for this offense class was 15 months. Therefore, at a minimum, one Class 1 misdemeanor conviction resulting in probation will require at least 15 months of supervision. The cost of 15 months of supervision is \$2,200 per offender (\$148 per month times 15 months).<sup>4</sup>

**SOURCES OF DATA:** Department of Public Safety; Administrative Office of the Courts; North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission; Office of Indigent Defense Services.

**TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS:** None

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the effective date of December 1, 2017 and the typical lag time between charge and conviction (6 months), little impact is assumed for CCS in FY 2017-18. Though some offenders may come under CCS supervision during this time, this note assumes an even entry over the course of FY 2018-19.

**APPROVED BY:**

Mark Trogdon, Director  
Fiscal Research Division

**DATE:** March 29, 2017



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