

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1979 SESSION

CHAPTER 983
HOUSE BILL 219

AN ACT TO ADOPT CERTAIN PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROGRAMS FOR THE
AGING.

Whereas, as of 1979, there are over 300,000 persons 60 years old or older in North Carolina, and this segment of our population constitutes over fourteen percent (14%) of our total population and is increasing at a rate three times faster than the State's population as a whole; and

Whereas, the group 75 years old and older is the fastest growing segment of our population; and

Whereas, sixty-three percent (63%) of these older citizens have an annual income of less than three thousand dollars (\$3,000) and as the costs of health care, housing and other necessities steadily rise they suffer the most from inflation because of fixed incomes and longer life spans; and

Whereas, services to older adults are fragmented and many older people who need help do not know where to find them; and

Whereas, older adults are one of our State's untapped resources and these individuals who have contributed so much to building our State are relegated to isolation with retirement and are victimized by economic and social forces beyond their control; Now, therefore;

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Article 3, Chapter 143B of the General Statutes, is hereby amended by adding a new Part following Part 14 to be designated Part 14A to read as follows:

"Part 14A.

"Policy Act for the Aging.

"§ 143B-181.3. Statement of principles. — To utilize effectively the resources of our State, to provide a better quality of life for our senior citizens, and to assure older adults the right of choosing where and how they want to live, the following principles are hereby endorsed:

- (1) Older people should be able to live as normal a life as possible.
- (2) Older adults should have a choice of life styles which will allow them to remain contributing members of society for as long as possible.
- (3) Preventive and primary health care are necessary to keep older adults active and contributing members of society.
- (4) Appropriate training in gerontology and geriatrics should be developed for individuals serving older adults.
- (5) Transportation to meet daily needs and to make accessible a broad range of services should be provided so that older persons may realize their full potential.
- (6) Services for older adults should be coordinated so that all their needs can be served efficiently and effectively.
- (7) Information on all services for older citizens and advocacy for these services should be available in each county.

- (8) Increased employment opportunities for older adults should be made available.
- (9) Options in housing should be made available.
- (10) Planning for programs for older citizens should always be done in consultation with them.
- (11) The State should aid older people to help themselves and should encourage families in caring for their older members.

"§ 143B-181.4. Responsibility for policy. — Responsibility for developing policy to carry out the purpose of this act is vested in the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources as provided in G.S. 143B-181.1 who may assign responsibility to the Assistant Secretary for Aging. The Assistant Secretary for Aging shall, at the request of the secretary, be the bridge between the federal and local level and shall review policies that affect the well being of older people with the goal of providing a balance in State programs to meet the social welfare and health needs of the total population. Responsibilities may include: (a) serving as chief advocate for older adults; (b) developing the State plan which will aid in the coordination of all programs for older people; (c) providing information and research to identify gaps in existing services; (d) promoting the development and expansion of services; (e) evaluation of programs; (f) bringing together the public and private sectors to provide services for older people."

Sec. 2. Severability. If any provision of this act or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application and to this end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

Sec. 3. No appropriations are required. This program and the provisions of this act shall be implemented to the extent appropriations are provided by the General Assembly but nothing herein contained shall be construed to obligate the General Assembly to appropriate additional funds.

Sec. 4. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 8th day of June, 1979.