

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 49

Short Title: Laura's Law. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives T. Moore, Hastings, Torbett, and H. Warren (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of Sponsors, see Bill Information on the NCGA Web Site.

Referred to: Judiciary Subcommittee B, if favorable, Finance.

February 9, 2011

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO INCREASE THE PUNISHMENT FOR DWI OFFENDERS WITH THREE OR MORE GROSSLY AGGRAVATING FACTORS, TO AUTHORIZE THE COURT TO REQUIRE CONTINUOUS ALCOHOL MONITORING FOR CERTAIN OFFENDERS, AND TO INCREASE THE COURT COSTS FOR DWI OFFENDERS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 20-179 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-179. **Sentencing hearing after conviction for impaired driving; determination of grossly aggravating and aggravating and mitigating factors; punishments.**

(a) Sentencing Hearing Required. – After a conviction under G.S. 20-138.1, G.S. 20-138.2, a second or subsequent conviction under G.S. 20-138.2A, or a second or subsequent conviction under G.S. 20-138.2B, or when any of those offenses are remanded back to district court after an appeal to superior court, the judge shall hold a sentencing hearing to determine whether there are aggravating or mitigating factors that affect the sentence to be imposed.

...

(c) Determining Existence of Grossly Aggravating Factors. – At the sentencing hearing, based upon the evidence presented at trial and in the hearing, the judge, or the jury in superior court, must first determine whether there are any grossly aggravating factors in the case. Whether a prior conviction exists under subdivision (1) of this subsection, or whether a conviction exists under subdivision (d)(5) of this section, shall be matters to be determined by the judge, and not the jury, in district or superior court. If the sentencing hearing is for a case remanded back to district court from superior court, the judge shall determine whether the defendant has been convicted of any offense that was not considered at the initial sentencing hearing and impose the appropriate sentence under this section. The judge must impose the Aggravated Level One punishment under subsection (g) of this section if it is determined that three or more grossly aggravating factors apply. The judge must impose the Level One punishment under subsection ~~(g)~~(g1) of this section if it is determined that two or more grossly aggravating factors apply. The judge must impose the Level Two punishment under subsection (h) of this section if it is determined that only one of the grossly aggravating factors applies. The grossly aggravating factors are:

(1) A prior conviction for an offense involving impaired driving if:

a. The conviction occurred within seven years before the date of the offense for which the defendant is being sentenced; or



- 1 b. The conviction occurs after the date of the offense for which the
2 defendant is presently being sentenced, but prior to or
3 contemporaneously with the present sentencing; or
4 c. The conviction occurred in district court; the case was appealed to
5 superior court; the appeal has been withdrawn, or the case has been
6 remanded back to district court; and a new sentencing hearing has
7 not been held pursuant to G.S. 20-38.7.

8 Each prior conviction is a separate grossly aggravating factor.

- 9 (2) Driving by the defendant at the time of the offense while his driver's license
10 was revoked under G.S. 20-28, and the revocation was an impaired driving
11 revocation under G.S. 20-28.2(a).
12 (3) Serious injury to another person caused by the defendant's impaired driving
13 at the time of the offense.
14 (4) Driving by the defendant while a child under the age of 16 years was in the
15 vehicle at the time of the offense.

16 In imposing an Aggravated Level One, a Level ~~One-One~~, or a Level Two punishment, the
17 judge may consider the aggravating and mitigating factors in subsections (d) and (e) in
18 determining the appropriate sentence. If there are no grossly aggravating factors in the case, the
19 judge must weigh all aggravating and mitigating factors and impose punishment as required by
20 subsection (f).

21 ...

22 (g) Aggravated Level One Punishment. – A defendant subject to Aggravated Level One
23 punishment may be fined up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and shall be sentenced to a term
24 of imprisonment that includes a minimum term of not less than 120 days and a maximum term
25 of not more than 36 months. Notwithstanding G.S. 15A-1371, a defendant sentenced to a term
26 of imprisonment pursuant to this subsection shall not be eligible for parole. The term of
27 imprisonment may be suspended only if a condition of special probation is imposed to require
28 the defendant to serve a term of imprisonment of at least 120 days. Subsection (k1) of this
29 section shall not apply to a defendant sentenced pursuant to this subsection. If the defendant is
30 placed on probation, the judge shall impose a requirement that the defendant obtain a substance
31 abuse assessment and the education or treatment required by G.S. 20-17.6 for the restoration of
32 a drivers license and as a condition of probation. The judge may impose any other lawful
33 condition of probation.

34 (g1) Level One Punishment. – A defendant subject to Level One punishment may be
35 fined up to four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment
36 that includes a minimum term of not less than 30 days and a maximum term of not more than
37 24 months. The term of imprisonment may be suspended only if a condition of special
38 probation is imposed to require the defendant to serve a term of imprisonment of at least 30
39 days. If the defendant is placed on probation, the judge shall impose a requirement that the
40 defendant obtain a substance abuse assessment and the education or treatment required by
41 G.S. 20-17.6 for the restoration of a drivers license and as a condition of probation. The judge
42 may impose any other lawful condition of probation.

43 ...

44 (h1) The judge may impose, as a condition of probation for defendants subject to
45 Aggravated Level One, Level ~~One-One~~, or Level Two punishments, that the defendant abstain
46 from alcohol consumption for a minimum of 30 days, to a maximum of ~~60 days~~, the term of
47 probation, as verified by a continuous alcohol monitoring system. The total cost to the
48 defendant for the continuous alcohol monitoring system may not exceed one thousand dollars
49 (\$1,000).–The defendant's abstinence from alcohol shall be verified by a continuous alcohol
50 monitoring system of a type approved by the Department of Correction.

1 ~~(h2) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (h1), if the court finds, upon good~~
2 ~~cause shown, that the defendant should not be required to pay the costs of the continuous~~
3 ~~alcohol monitoring system, the court shall not impose the use of a continuous alcohol~~
4 ~~monitoring system unless the local governmental entity responsible for the incarceration of the~~
5 ~~defendant in the local confinement facility agrees to pay the costs of the system.~~

6 (h3) Any fees or costs paid pursuant to ~~subsections (h1) or (h2)~~ subsection (h1) of this
7 section shall be paid to the clerk of court for the county in which the judgment was entered or
8 the deferred prosecution agreement was filed. Fees or costs collected under this subsection shall
9 be transmitted to the entity providing the continuous alcohol monitoring system.

10 ...

11 (k1) Credit for Inpatient Treatment. – Pursuant to G.S. 15A-1351(a), the judge may order
12 that a term of imprisonment imposed as a condition of special probation under ~~any level of~~
13 ~~punishment~~ subsection (g1), (h), (i), (j), or (k) of this section be served as an inpatient in a
14 facility operated or licensed by the State for the treatment of alcoholism or substance abuse
15 where the defendant has been accepted for admission or commitment as an inpatient. The
16 defendant shall bear the expense of any treatment unless the trial judge orders that the costs be
17 absorbed by the State. The judge may impose restrictions on the defendant's ability to leave the
18 premises of the treatment facility and require that the defendant follow the rules of the
19 treatment facility. The judge may credit against the active sentence imposed on a defendant the
20 time the defendant was an inpatient at the treatment facility, provided such treatment occurred
21 after the commission of the offense for which the defendant is being sentenced. This section
22 shall not be construed to limit the authority of the judge in sentencing under any other
23 provisions of law.

24 "

25 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 20-19(e) reads as rewritten:

26 "(e) When a person's license is revoked under (i) G.S. 20-17(a)(2) and the person has
27 two or more previous offenses involving impaired driving for which the person has been
28 convicted, and the most recent offense occurred within the five years immediately preceding
29 the date of the offense for which the person's license is being ~~revoked, or (ii) revoked, (ii)~~
30 G.S. 20-17(a)(2) and the person was sentenced pursuant to G.S. 20-179(g) for the offense
31 resulting in the revocation, or (iii) G.S. 20-17(a)(9) due to a violation of G.S. 20-141.4(a4), the
32 revocation is permanent."

33 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 20-17.8 reads as rewritten:

34 "**§ 20-17.8. Restoration of a license after certain driving while impaired convictions;**
35 **ignition interlock.**

36 (a) Scope. – This section applies to a person whose license was revoked as a result of a
37 conviction of driving while impaired, G.S. 20-138.1, and:

38 (1) The person had an alcohol concentration of 0.15 or ~~more; or more;~~

39 (2) The person has been convicted of another offense involving impaired
40 driving, which offense occurred within seven years immediately preceding
41 the date of the offense for which the person's license has been
42 ~~revoked; or~~

43 (3) The person was sentenced pursuant to G.S. 20-179(g).

44 For purposes of subdivision (1) of this subsection, the results of a chemical analysis, as
45 shown by an affidavit or affidavits executed pursuant to G.S. 20-16.2(c1), shall be used by the
46 Division to determine that person's alcohol concentration.

47 ...

48 (b) **(Effective until December 1, 2014)** Ignition Interlock Required. – Except as
49 provided in subsection (1) of this section, when the Division restores the license of a person
50 who is subject to this section, in addition to any other restriction or condition, it shall require

1 the person to agree to and shall indicate on the person's drivers license the following
2 restrictions for the period designated in subsection (c):

- 3 (1) A restriction that the person may operate only a vehicle that is equipped with
4 a functioning ignition interlock system of a type approved by the
5 Commissioner. The Commissioner shall not unreasonably withhold approval
6 of an ignition interlock system and shall consult with the Division of
7 Purchase and Contract in the Department of Administration to ensure that
8 potential vendors are not discriminated against.
- 9 (2) A requirement that the person personally activate the ignition interlock
10 system before driving the motor vehicle.
- 11 (3) An alcohol concentration restriction as follows:
- 12 a. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant only to
13 subdivision (a)(1) of this section, a requirement that the person not
14 drive with an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater;
- 15 b. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant to subdivision
16 (a)(2) or (a)(3), or subsection (a1) of this section, a requirement that
17 the person not drive with an alcohol concentration of greater than
18 0.00; or
- 19 c. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant to subdivision
20 (a)(1) of this section, and the person has also been convicted, based
21 on the same set of circumstances, of: (i) driving while impaired in a
22 commercial vehicle, G.S. 20-138.2, (ii) driving while less than 21
23 years old after consuming alcohol or drugs, G.S. 20-138.3, (iii) a
24 violation of G.S. 20-141.4, or (iv) manslaughter or negligent
25 homicide resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle when the
26 offense involved impaired driving, a requirement that the person not
27 drive with an alcohol concentration of greater than 0.00.

28 (b) **(Effective December 1, 2014)** Ignition Interlock Required. – Except as provided in
29 subsection (l) of this section, when the Division restores the license of a person who is subject
30 to this section, in addition to any other restriction or condition, it shall require the person to
31 agree to and shall indicate on the person's drivers license the following restrictions for the
32 period designated in subsection (c):

- 33 (1) A restriction that the person may operate only a vehicle that is equipped with
34 a functioning ignition interlock system of a type approved by the
35 Commissioner. The Commissioner shall not unreasonably withhold approval
36 of an ignition interlock system and shall consult with the Division of
37 Purchase and Contract in the Department of Administration to ensure that
38 potential vendors are not discriminated against.
- 39 (2) A requirement that the person personally activate the ignition interlock
40 system before driving the motor vehicle.
- 41 (3) An alcohol concentration restriction as follows:
- 42 a. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant only to
43 subdivision (a)(1) of this section, a requirement that the person not
44 drive with an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater;
- 45 b. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant to subdivision
46 (a)(2) or (a)(3) of this section, a requirement that the person not drive
47 with an alcohol concentration of greater than 0.00; or
- 48 c. If the ignition interlock system is required pursuant to subdivision
49 (a)(1) of this section, and the person has also been convicted, based
50 on the same set of circumstances, of: (i) driving while impaired in a
51 commercial vehicle, G.S. 20-138.2, (ii) driving while less than 21

1 years old after consuming alcohol or drugs, G.S. 20-138.3, (iii) a
2 violation of G.S. 20-141.4, or (iv) manslaughter or negligent
3 homicide resulting from the operation of a motor vehicle when the
4 offense involved impaired driving, a requirement that the person not
5 drive with an alcohol concentration of greater than 0.00.

6"

7 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 7A-304(a) reads as rewritten:

8 "(a) In every criminal case in the superior or district court, wherein the defendant is
9 convicted, or enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, or when costs are assessed against the
10 prosecuting witness, the following costs shall be assessed and collected, except that when the
11 judgment imposes an active prison sentence, costs shall be assessed and collected only when
12 the judgment specifically so provides, and that no costs may be assessed when a case is
13 dismissed.

14 ...

15 (10) For support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of one hundred dollars
16 (\$100.00) is payable by a defendant convicted under G.S. 20-138.1,
17 G.S. 20-138.2, a second or subsequent conviction under G.S. 20-138.2A, or
18 a second or subsequent conviction under G.S. 20-138.2B, to be remitted to
19 the State Treasurer. This fee shall be in addition to the fee required by
20 subsection (4a) of this section."

21 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2011, and applies to
22 offenses committed on or after that date.