

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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SENATE BILL 481\*

Short Title: Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Jones.

Referred to: Mental Health & Youth Services.

April 4, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 122C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
5 Article to read:

6 "Article 8.

7 "Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights.

8 "**§ 122C-35. Findings.**

9 The General Assembly finds that mental health workers employed to carry out the  
10 provisions of this Chapter provide care for people with special needs and that to provide quality  
11 care there must be some basic rights and standards that every mental health worker has a right  
12 to expect.

13 "**§ 122C-36. Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights.**

14 It is the policy of this State that the core elements of the Mental Health Workers' Bill of  
15 Rights for workers employed to carry out the provisions of this Chapter shall include all of the  
16 following:

- 17 (1) The right to a safe workplace, including protecting oneself from harm with  
18 consideration for the safety of the patients, and the right to refuse work that  
19 poses a danger to one's health and safety.  
20 (2) The right to adequate staffing levels.  
21 (3) The right to adequate and updated equipment and techniques to insure safer  
22 working conditions and quality care for the patients.  
23 (4) The right to family-supporting wages so that mental healthcare workers can  
24 devote their time to the care of their patients and not have to take on second  
25 jobs.  
26 (5) The right to refuse excessive overtime.  
27 (6) The right to a timely briefing about the behaviors of patients that workers are  
28 assigned to care for.  
29 (7) The right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of job  
30 classification.  
31 (8) The right to fair and equal treatment and opportunities regardless of race,  
32 gender, age, national origin, immigration, sexual orientation, disabilities,  
33 physical abilities, or religion.  
34 (9) The right to a grievance procedure, which includes the right to grieve all  
35 matters that can impact safety, evaluations, raises, transfers, and promotions  
36 with representation of one's choices at all levels.



- 1           (10) The right to have input in decisions impacting working conditions in the  
2                   facilities where one works and at the departmental and legislative levels."  
3           **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.