

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 518

Short Title: Project Newsletter. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Setzer.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: State and Local Government, if favorable, Commerce and Economic Development, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

March 27, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENSURE COMPETITION AND LOWER COSTS FOR PUBLICATION OF
NOTICES BY UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 143-129.11. Request for proposals for publication of notices.

(a) Annually, at the start of each fiscal year, a contract for publication of notices by units of local government and local school administrative units shall be made after informal bids have been secured. The informal bid process shall be designed to maximize competition among eligible newspapers while ensuring the best value for public funds.

(b) All contracts under this section shall be awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder, taking into consideration quality, performance, circulation reach, cost, and compliance with Article 50 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes.

(c) It shall be the duty of any officer, department, board, local school administrative unit, or commission entering into such contract to keep a record of all informal bids submitted, and such record shall not be subject to public inspection until the contract has been awarded.

(d) If there is no eligible newspaper for the unit of local government or local school administrative unit, the contract for publication of notices shall be awarded to an eligible newspaper as described in G.S. 1-597(b) or G.S. 1-599.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Local school administrative unit. – As defined in G.S. 115C-5.

(2) Newspaper. – As described in G.S. 1-597(a).

(3) Publish, publication, and other forms of the verb "to publish." – As defined in G.S. 153A-1, 159-1, and 160A-1.

(4) Unit of local government. – As defined in G.S. 159-7."

SECTION 2. G.S. 1-596 reads as rewritten:

"§ 1-596. Charges for legal advertising.

(a) The publication of all advertising required by law to be made in newspapers in this State shall be paid for at not to exceed the local commercial rate of the newspapers selected. Any public or municipal officer or board created by or existing under the laws of this State ~~that is now or may hereafter be~~ authorized by law to enter into contracts for the publication of legal advertisements is hereby authorized to ~~pay therefor prices not exceeding said rates~~ pay in accordance with the contract entered into under G.S. 143-129.11.



1 (b) No newspaper in this State shall accept or print any legal advertising until said
2 newspaper shall have first filed with the clerk of the superior court of the county in which it is
3 published a sworn statement of its current commercial rate for the several classes of advertising
4 regularly carried by said publication, and any owner or manager of a newspaper violating the
5 provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor."

6 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026, and applies to notices
7 published on or after that date.