

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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SENATE BILL 581

Short Title: Revise Neglected Juvenile Definition. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lee, Chaudhuri, and Burgin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 26, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF NEGLECTED JUVENILE TO EXEMPT
CERTAIN INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 7B-101(15) reads as rewritten:

"(15) Neglected juvenile. – Any juvenile less than 18 years of age (i) who is found to be a minor victim of human trafficking under G.S. 14-43.15 or (ii) whose parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker does any of the following:

- a. Does not provide proper care, supervision, or discipline.
- b. Has abandoned the juvenile, except where that juvenile is a safely surrendered infant as defined in this Subchapter.
- c. Has not provided or arranged for the provision of necessary medical or remedial care.
- d. Or whose parent, guardian, or custodian has refused to follow the recommendations of the Juvenile and Family Team made pursuant to Article 27A of this Chapter.
- e. Creates or allows to be created a living environment that is injurious to the juvenile's welfare.
- f. Has participated or attempted to participate in the unlawful transfer of custody of the juvenile under G.S.14-321.2.
- g. Has placed the juvenile for care or adoption in violation of law.

In determining whether a juvenile is a neglected juvenile, it is relevant whether that juvenile lives in a home where another juvenile has died as a result of suspected abuse or neglect or lives in a home where another juvenile has been subjected to abuse or neglect by an adult who regularly lives in the home.

It shall not be considered neglect of a juvenile if a parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker allows the juvenile to engage in independent activities without adult supervision if a reasonable and prudent parent would consider the independent activity safe and appropriate based on the juvenile's age, maturity, and physical and mental abilities. For purposes of this subdivision, independent activities include (i) travelling to and from school, including walking, running, or bicycling, (ii) travelling to and from nearby commercial or recreational facilities, (iii) remaining at home for a reasonable period of time, and (iv) playing outdoors."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

