

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL 601

Short Title: Funds & Authority/Appoint NC Surgeon General. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Nickel (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 7, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE POSITION OF NORTH CAROLINA SURGEON GENERAL;
3 AUTHORIZING THE GOVERNOR TO APPOINT A NORTH CAROLINA SURGEON
4 GENERAL TO SERVE AS THE STATE'S CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCATE; AND
5 APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR FOR THE
6 CREATION OF THIS POSITION.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 147 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
9 Article to read:

10 "Article 3E.

11 "North Carolina Surgeon General.

12 "**§ 147-33.125. North Carolina Surgeon General; appointment, duties, and salary.**

13 (a) There is established the position of North Carolina Surgeon General for the State of
14 North Carolina. The Governor shall appoint a North Carolina Surgeon General to serve as the
15 State's chief public health advocate. The North Carolina Surgeon General shall serve for a term
16 of four years, to run concurrently with the term of the Governor. Beginning January 1, 2024, the
17 appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the Senate. The North Carolina Surgeon General
18 may be appointed to consecutive terms.

19 (b) The North Carolina Surgeon General shall report directly to the Governor and shall
20 work closely with the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
21 (Secretary) to ensure compliance with the strategic plans, policies, and implementation activities
22 of the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). The Department shall provide
23 adequate staff and other support as needed.

24 (c) The North Carolina Surgeon General shall advise the Governor and the Secretary on
25 health policy and be a key spokesperson for the State on public health issues throughout the State
26 by providing North Carolina residents with the best medical and scientific evidence on current
27 health issues through public health reports and other tools of public communication.

28 (d) The North Carolina Surgeon General shall have the following qualifications:

29 (1) Be a physician licensed to practice medicine in this State.

30 (2) Possess exceptional communication skills across multiple platforms,
31 including scientific and community forums, policy-making venues, and
32 traditional and digital media outlets.

33 (3) Be a recognized leader in addressing the root causes of health disparities.

34 (4) Have a demonstrated commitment to serving individuals whose health
35 outcomes are at risk due to social determinants of health such as food



1 insecurity, housing instability, unmet transportation needs, and interpersonal
2 violence.

3 (e) The salary of the North Carolina Surgeon General shall be fixed by the Governor."

4 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of the
5 Governor the sum of up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) in recurring funds for
6 the 2020-2021 fiscal year to create one full-time North Carolina Surgeon General position within
7 the Office of the Governor, in accordance with G.S. 147-33.125.

8 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.