

North Carolina Bill Would Expand Workplace Violence Prevention Act

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North Carolina's [Senate Bill \(SB\) 484](#), sponsored by Senators Timothy Moffitt, Warren Daniel, and Danny Britt, would amend the Workplace Violence Prevention Act by allowing employers to seek restraining orders against "mass picketing" that blocks access to businesses and public roads.

Quick Hits

- North Carolina is one of several states that have specific workplace violence prevention laws.
- North Carolina's Workplace Violence Prevention Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 95, Article 23 (WVPA) allows employers to pursue certain protections on behalf of their employees who face "unlawful conduct" (i.e., physical violence or threats thereof), including by obtaining civil no-contact orders, and to prevent discrimination and retaliation against employees who miss work because of domestic violence or other harassment.
- Recently introduced legislation would amend the WVPA's definition of "unlawful conduct" to include mass picketing that would hinder or prevent the "pursuit of any lawful work or employment," obstruction of entrances to or from the place of employment, and mass picketing that would obstruct the use of public roads, streets, and other areas of travel.
- The amendments would also allow employers to seek civil no-contact orders on behalf of the employer itself, instead of a specific employee.
- The bill exempts peaceful demonstrations, informational picketing, and legally protected labor activity—unless they involve violence, threats, or intentional obstruction.

Senate Bill 484: Workplace Violence Prevention/Mass Picketing

North Carolina's Workplace Violence Prevention Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. Chapter 95, Article 23 (WVPA) allows employers to pursue certain legal remedies on behalf of their employees who face "unlawful conduct" by obtaining civil no-contact orders against the perpetrators on behalf of the employee. The WVPA also prevents discrimination and retaliation against employees who are absent from work because of domestic violence or other harassment.

The current iteration of the WVPA defines unlawful conduct as threats or actual instances of physical violence. Senate Bill 484 would amend the WVPA by expanding the definition of "unlawful conduct" at the workplace to include certain forms of mass picketing, allowing employers to obtain civil no-

contact orders against mass picketers on behalf of employees as well as the employer. The bill defines “mass picketing” as:

[p]icketing, with or without signs, that constitutes an obstacle to the ingress and egress to and from the premises being picketed or any other premises, or upon the public roads, streets, highways, or other ways of travel or conveyance, either by obstructing by their persons or by placing of vehicles or other physical obstructions.

The bill would add three new behaviors to the list of unlawful conduct: (1) hindering or preventing lawful work or employment through “mass picketing, unlawful threats, or force”; (2) obstructing entrances and exits to a workplace via mass picketing; and (3) obstructing public roads, highways, or transport systems through similar tactics. These amendments would prohibit “obstructions” of the workplace, which the SB 484 defines as “sustained or deliberate physical blockage that substantially and materially prevents ingress or egress that causes demonstrable disruption to operations or public safety.”

Additionally, the current iteration of the WVPA allows employers to obtain civil no-contact orders specifically on behalf of the employee, that is, to obtain an order prohibiting a perpetrator from contacting a specific employee. SB 484 would amend the WVPA to allow employers to file for a civil no-contact order on behalf of itself, thereby prohibiting mass picketers from accessing the employer’s place of employment, provided that the conduct in question occurs at or affects the workplace. The amendment also states that no physical injury or property damage is required to obtain such an order, and it mandates that respondents be notified before permanent orders are issued.

SB 484 states that the bill is not intended to conflict with the North Carolina State Constitution, and that the WVPA, as amended, would not apply to peaceful demonstrations, informational picketing, or labor activity protected by the National Labor Relations Act or the North Carolina Constitution.

Key Takeaways

SB 484 aims to strengthen workplace safety laws in North Carolina by specifically addressing disruptions caused by mass picketing. If passed, it would broaden the scope of North Carolina’s Workplace Violence Prevention laws by defining “mass picketing” and “obstruction” in a way that targets activities that physically block or interfere with access to workplaces or public roads. The bill allows employers not only to act on behalf of employees but also to seek legal remedies for their own protection through civil no-contact orders. The bill was amended in the Senate Judiciary Committee, and on May 8, 2025, was referred to the Committee on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

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National Law Review, Volume XV, Number 140

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/north-carolina-bill-would-expand-workplace-violence-prevention-act>