



North Carolina General Assembly
House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

APPROPRIATIONS
APPROPRIATIONS, GENERAL GOVERNMENT
HOMELAND SECURITY AND MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS
INSURANCE

September 21st, 2025

The Honorable Josh Stein, Governor of North Carolina

The North Carolina Senate
The Honorable Phil Berger, President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Sydney Batch, Minority Leader

The North Carolina House of Representatives
The Honorable Destin Hall, Speaker
The Honorable Robert Reives, Minority Leader

Dear Governor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President & Leaders:

Considering the recent and heartbreaking murder of a Ukrainian refugee on Charlotte's transit system, renewed attention has been directed toward violent crime in our state. While such tragedies demand our response, I write today to urge you not to overlook the reality that our rural communities are facing a silent public safety crisis of their own.

Too often, the conversation around violent crime focuses solely on our cities. But according to the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation's most recent data, **the highest violent crime rates per 100,000 residents are not in Charlotte or Raleigh – but in rural counties such as Montgomery, Robeson, Scotland, Vance, Lenoir, Cumberland, Edgecombe, Beaufort, Northampton, and Richmond.** These counties, including Northampton, which is in my own District 27, are too frequently on the frontlines of gun violence, domestic violence, and drug-related crime, without receiving commensurate attention or support.

Our rural sheriffs' departments and first responders are stretched thin. If we're serious about stopping crime across North Carolina, we must support every community – not just the ones near Raleigh or Charlotte.



With that in mind, I am calling for the formation of a **bipartisan Rural Violent Crime Task Force** to examine the root causes and propose tailored solutions. This task force should include legislators from both chambers and parties, alongside local sheriffs, educators, EMTs, non-profit leaders, faith leaders, re-entry council leaders, mental and behavioral health professionals, and families of victims. A broader **bipartisan Rural Public Safety Roundtable** – convening stakeholders from across the state – could be instrumental in crafting durable, community-driven policy.

Additionally, and like the bill introduced by Representative Pyrtle earlier this session, we should craft legislation to study the future of rural law enforcement.

As we debate public safety legislation in the coming days, I respectfully request that we consider amendments to upcoming crime bills that would:

- Provide additional funding for rural law enforcement agencies,
- Expand Community Violence Prevention Grants targeting small towns,
- Increase support for rural mental health and youth programs, and
- Fund local Re-entry Councils, particularly in rural areas, which play a critical role in helping justice-involved individuals reintegrate into society and reduce recidivism.

As a former educator, I strongly agree with Speaker Hall’s proposal to ensure every public school – traditional or charter – has a School Resource Officer (SRO). I would also welcome legislation enabling retired law enforcement officers to serve as SROs in private and faith-based schools, particularly in rural counties where law enforcement personnel are limited. We have a retired Chief Deputy serving as an SRO at a private school in District 27.

The formation of a bipartisan rural violent crime task force and the targeted investments I’ve outlined are essential first steps in addressing a crisis that has been ignored for far too long.

Rural lives matter just as much in the statewide conversation about crime and justice. I look forward to working with each of you to advance meaningful, bipartisan action that brings safety, support, and hope to all corners of our great state.

Sincerely,



Representative Rodney D. Pierce
NC House of Representatives
District 27 – Halifax, Northampton & Warren Counties