

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023**

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SENATE BILL 301

Short Title: Designate May as "Learn to Fly" Month. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Jarvis, Perry, and Johnson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 14, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF MAY AS "LEARN TO FLY" MONTH.

Whereas, the year 2023 is the 120th anniversary of the nationally recognized first flight by Wilbur and Orville Wright, which took place on December 17, 1903; and

Whereas, the Wright Brothers' historic flight in Kitty Hawk, NC, is recognized as the first flight that resulted in pilots improving their heavier-than-air aircraft, which had a noteworthy effect on modern aviation; and

Whereas, the pilot shortage in the United States is predicted to be between 8,000-12,000 pilots in 2023; and

Whereas, by 2041, it is estimated that 602,000 new pilots and 610,000 technicians will be needed worldwide; and

Whereas, major airlines in the United States, such as American Airlines, Delta, and Southwest, cannot source pilots with enough experience; and

Whereas, the pilot shortage in the United States is related to several factors, including:

- (1) The "1,500 Hour Rule," which increased the minimum flight time required to become a commercial airline pilot from 250 to 1,500 hours.
- (2) A record number of captains and first officers retiring over the next 2-5 years, creating an even more significant shortage.
- (3) Air travel demand recovering from COVID-19 much faster than the rest of the world.
- (4) Fewer military pilots leaving active duty; and

Whereas, years ago, airline pilot applicants were required to have a college degree. Today, the regional airlines hire pilots to become First Officers (co-pilots) without a college degree; and

Whereas, a free program, "The AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM Curriculum," is the first of its kind, offering students comprehensive four-year aviation study options aligned to Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and FAA Airman Certification Standards (ACS), which could be readily available to all North Carolina high school students enrolled in participating schools/LEAs; and

Whereas, North Carolina is home to over 200 leading aerospace manufacturing companies spread across the State; and

Whereas, the highest ratio of airline pilot placements comes from graduates of ATP's Airline Career Pilot program, which has locations in North Carolina; and

Whereas, North Carolina State University has conferred over 450 aerospace engineering degrees over the past five years; and



1 Whereas, North Carolina's public airports annually contribute \$72 billion to the State's
2 economy, supporting 330,000 jobs that generate \$23 billion in personal income and returning
3 \$3.7 billion in State and local tax revenues; and

4 Whereas, to encourage the citizens of this State to learn more about aviation, the
5 month of May should be designated as "Learn to Fly" Month in the State of North Carolina; Now,
6 therefore,

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 103 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
9 section to read:

10 **"§ 103-17. Learn to Fly Month.**

11 The month of May of each year is designated as "Learn to Fly" Month in North Carolina."

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