



RULES OF THE STATE LEGISLATIVE COMPLEX

EXPLAINED

You have the right to petition your government.

You may have heard that new rules were adopted to regulate the public's use of the State Legislative Building and its grounds in Raleigh, but you still have the right to petition your government and freely assemble at the legislature! The First Amendment protects "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." The North Carolina Constitution specifically protects the right of the people "to assemble together to consult for their common good, to instruct their representatives, and to apply to the General Assembly for redress of grievances," so don't be afraid to take your message straight to your Representative in Raleigh.

Here are some rules and best practices to remember when visiting the North Carolina Legislature:

1. Except for some holidays, the North Carolina Legislative Building is open from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Saturdays and from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. on Sundays. The building is also open past 5 p.m. on any days when the House or Senate schedules session or committee meetings that run past 5 p.m. The Legislative Office Building, where some legislative committees meet and many legislators have offices is also open during regular business hours.¹ You have the right to enter either legislative building to meet with your legislators, distribute information, watch committee meetings, or observe the House or Senate session. You can enter alone or with a group without obtaining prior authorization or any type of permit. You should not be asked to cease any expressive activity or leave the building unless you are being disruptive of legislative committees, House or Senate sessions, or other legislative work.²
2. When visiting the legislative complex, you can carry a sign expressing support for or opposition to any policies or ideas being considered in the legislature. Just

¹ Rules of the State Legislative Buildings and Legislative Office Building Adopted by the Legislative Services Commission, Restated May 15, 2014, III.A.1, available at <http://www.ncleg.net/NCGAInfo/BuildingRules5-15-2014.pdf>.

² Rules at III.C.2.

make sure your sign isn't on a handstick or post and that you don't attach your sign to any walls, chair, pillars or other equipment inside the legislative complex.³

3. You can walk around any floor of the legislative building or legislative office building. You cannot be asked to leave the legislature or the complex unless you are being disruptive of legislative work. If you are asked to leave and you do not believe you have been disruptive or you are asked to leave, but others behaving similarly to you are not, call the ACLU-NC at 919-834-3466.
4. If you or your group or organization would like to organize an event at the legislature such as a lobby day, rally or press conference, you can definitely do that! If you expect a group of more than 25 but less than 200 people to assemble as part of your event, you can, but are not required to, reserve the front lawn of the Legislative Building at 16 W. Jones Street.⁴
5. If you are planning an educational event, exhibit, conference, or contest, you can reserve the legislative auditorium, a table inside the legislative building on the first floor or an area outside the back door of the legislative building near the pedestrian bridge leading to the legislative office building.⁵ All of these spaces can be reserved by calling the Legislative Services Officer at 919-733-7044. Your request to use the space may not be denied based on the message you hope to deliver to legislators or the content of your speech.⁶
6. If you get authorization to use any space within the legislative complex, you must clean up after yourself, take any of literature, banners, signs or material with you and return the space to its original state.⁷ Failure to return the space to its original condition could result in you not being able to reserve a space in the future.
7. If you reasonably expect a group of more than 200 people to attend your event, you can reserve the Halifax Mall behind the legislative building by contacting the Department of Administration or use this form <http://www.doa.nc.gov/facility/documents/permit.pdf>. You can also reserve the Bicentennial Mall across the street from the legislature or the State Capitol Grounds using this form.
8. While it is certainly a good idea to reserve a space for your event, rally, or press conference, if you don't have a reservation, don't worry! You can still go to the legislature and hold your event using parts of the legislative complex, including the front lawn, the quadrants on the first floor of the legislative building or the

³ Rules at III.C.4.

⁴ Rules at V.D.4.

⁵ Rules at V.D.3.

⁶ Rules at V.A.2.

⁷ Rules at V.A.3.

area outside the back door of the legislative building near the bridge without violating any rules.⁸ Just make sure that your event doesn't interfere with an event that reserved the space or disturb any legislative activities going on and you should still be allowed to use the space.

All of the rules applicable to the state legislative complex are available at <http://www.ncleg.net/NCGAInfo/BuildingRules5-15-2014.pdf>. If you are denied a reservation when you call to request one or are asked to cease behavior or leave the legislative complex in error, contact the ACLU-NC for assistance at 919-834-3466 or acluofnc.org.

⁸ Rules at V.D.5.