

Legislation Allowing Online Legal Documents Sent To Governor

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Raleigh - The General Assembly has sent to the Governor legislation that allows online services to provide legal documents in the state. House Bill 436 redefines the term "practice of law" by exempting services that provide blank legal documents, such as wills, lease agreements and promissory notes, that people can fill out online, purchase and print. The services, such as LegalZoom, must register with the State Bar every year. Another requirement is each type of document must be approved by a licensed North Carolina attorney before going online.

The services also must include a disclaimer that the online documents aren't a substitute for seeking legal advice, and any customer satisfaction disputes must be referred to the State Bar.

The State Bar and LegalZoom have been at odds for years, with Bar officials accusing the website of offering legal advice without a license. LegalZoom countered the Bar was trying to block competition.