



# HOUSE BILL 1157: Abolish Coroner in Various Counties.

2019-2020 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	July 27, 2020
<b>Introduced by:</b>		<b>Prepared by:</b>	Jessica Boney*
<b>Analysis of:</b>	S.L. 2020-21		Staff Attorney

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**OVERVIEW:** *S.L. 2020-21 abolishes the office of coroner in Montgomery County effective June 17, 2020. It also abolishes the office of coroner in Avery, Bladen, Hoke, Counties and makes various changes to coroner terms effective January 1, 2021.*

**CURRENT LAW:** Chapter 152 of the General Statutes sets out the duties of elected county coroners in the State.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Section 1 abolishes the office of coroner in Montgomery County and provides that Chapter 152 of the General Statutes does not apply to Montgomery County.

Section 2 abolishes the office of coroner in Avery, Bladen, and Hoke Counties, and provides that Chapter 152 of the General Statutes does not apply to those counties.

Section 3 of the bill provides that, notwithstanding Section 2, any coroner elected in the 2018 or 2020 general election serves the remainder of the coroner's term. Section 3 further provides that in the event a vacancy in the office occurs, a person could be appointed to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The abolishment of the office of coroner in Montgomery County became effective June 17, 2020 and the abolishment of the office of coroner in Avery, Bladen, Hoke Counties becomes effective January 1, 2021. Coroner term changes are effective January 1, 2021.

## BACKGROUND:

- From 1965-67, several local laws were enacted providing for the appointment of medical doctors as county medical examiners and abolishing the office of coroner in several counties.
- In 1967, the General Assembly enacted S.L. 1967-1154 which established the State Office of Chief Medical Examiner to provide for a Statewide system for postmortem examinations of deaths related to crimes, suicide, prison confinement, or other specified circumstances.
- Since the 1960s, the office of elected county coroner has been abolished in most counties of the State.

*Jessica Sammons, Bill Patterson and Nicholas Giddings, staff attorneys in the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*

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