



HOUSE BILL 620: Administrative Office of the Court Agency Requests.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2025-54

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S.L. 2025-54 (House Bill 620) makes various changes to the statutes affecting the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the courts of North Carolina.

Section 1 adds the newly established High Point University School of Law to the recipient list of State Appellate Division reports.

Section 2 makes a technical correction to replace "drug treatment court" with "local judicially managed accountability and recovery court" (JMARC) for consistency with Article 62 of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes. It also clarifies that Article 62 of Chapter 7A applies to all JMARC regardless of funding source. This section became effective August 1, 2025.

Section 3 prohibits the use of modified AOC forms without proper notice that the form has been modified. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to modified forms used on or after that date.

Section 4 repeals the requirement that a person who wishes to change his or her name must give 10 days' notice of the application by publication at the courthouse. This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to applications for a name change filed on or after that date.

Section 5 clarifies that no bond is required of a bank or trust company licensed to do business in this State that has powers or privileges granted in its charter to serve as guardian. A notary public will be permitted to acknowledge a bond. This section becomes effective December 1, 2025.

Section 6 makes technical changes and requires a commission instead of a jury in cases concerning the election of a surviving spouse to take a life interest in lieu of an intestate share. It changes the extension time to qualify or renounce as Executor or Administrator to 20 days. Accounts of an estate filed with the clerk of superior court are required to contain certified copies of wills in any county where the decedent owned real estate after the will is probated. It also clarifies the procedure for transferring a motor vehicle upon inheritance or devise and the procedure for depositing a will with the clerk of superior court. This section becomes effective December 1, 2025.

Section 7 clarifies that the jurisdiction of superior court judges assigned to a specific case is the same as the jurisdiction of a regular judge over matters arising in the regular judge's district.

Section 8 makes a technical correction to remove a reference to a repealed statute.

Section 9 modifies provisions related to domestic violence protective orders by specifying that the clerk does not have to effect service if the appropriate law enforcement agency is not in North Carolina. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to service of process occurring on or after that date.

Section 10 does the following related to juvenile custody:

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Director



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- Adds an indictment and an information to the charging documents to be considered when a request for secure or nonsecure custody of a juvenile is made.
- Updates G.S. 7B-1904 to facilitate the procedure in G.S. 15A-960 to remove a case from superior court back to juvenile court.
- Modifies the process for release of an obligor from a juvenile's bond if the case is removed to juvenile court.

This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to proceedings occurring on or after that date.

Section 11 requires clerks to send copies of inpatient commitment orders to the entities or physicians responsible for providing treatment within 48 hours of the hearing. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to orders issued on or after that date.

Section 12 includes retirement as a reason a judge can be unavailable in proceedings regarding judicial settlement. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to actions taken on or after that date.

Section 12.2 requires AOC to prescribe rules for any training or educational material provided to jurors and prohibits the court from providing jurors with any training or educational material not allowed under AOC rules. This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to training or educational material provided on or after that date.

Section 12.3 provides that except for original stenomask audio files and audio files of digital recording technicians, audio recordings created by court reporters are not public records and can be disclosed to the parties or the public only to the extent allowed by a court order for good cause shown.

Section 12.4 clarifies when a landlord is permitted to charge reasonable attorneys' fees to a tenant if an eviction is based on a default other than the nonpayment of rent. This section is effective retroactively to September 9, 2024.

Section 12.5 modifies the mandatory retirement statutes for superior court judges and district court judges. Under previous law, no superior court judge or district judge could continue in office beyond the last day of the month in which the judge attains 72 years of age. This section allows superior court judges and district judges to continue serving until the last day of the calendar year in which the judge attains 72 years of age. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to judicial retirements on or after that date.

Section 13 establishes a procedure regarding the suspension, removal, or reinstatement of Clerks of Superior Court. This section became effective July 2, 2025, and applies to proceedings based upon clerk conduct occurring on or after that date.

Section 14 clarifies who can serve as a Business Court Judge and what cases can be designated as complex business cases. It also clarifies which cases can be appealed. This section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to judges designated and proceedings held on or after that date.

Section 15 grants the AOC Director the authority to create an official flag, seal, and other emblems of the judicial branch.

Section 16 clarifies the authority of the AOC Director to set the number of magistrates within a county above the minimum required for that county.

Section 17 clarifies the requirements for the disbursement of expenses to personnel of the judicial department.

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Section 18 modifies mediated settlement procedures in superior court and district court. Specifically, evidence from mediated settlement conferences pursuant to G.S. 7A-38.1, G.S. 7A-38.3B, G.S. 7A-38.3D, and G.S. 7A-38.4A are admissible in proceedings for abuse, neglect, or dependency of a juvenile or proceedings for abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an adult.

Section 19 clarifies the authority of a senior resident superior court judge in the event of disability of another judge. It also requires a special license plate issued to a senior resident superior court judge serving in districts 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 8C, 9A, 9B, 15A, 15B, 43A, and 43B to also include the letter associated with the district's number.

Section 20 grants the North Carolina State Bar the authority to discipline out of state attorneys practicing law in North Carolina.

Section 21 allows for certain physical documents to be converted to an electronic format for filing with the General Court of Justice.

Except as otherwise provided above, this act became effective July 2, 2025.