



HOUSE BILL 620: AOC Agency Requests.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee: Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate
Introduced by: Rep. Stevens
Analysis of: Third Edition

Date: June 24, 2025
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OVERVIEW: *House Bill 620 would modify provisions affecting the courts of North Carolina and the Administrative Office of the Courts ("AOC").*

CURRENT LAW AND BILL ANALYSIS:

House Bill 620 would make various changes to the statutes affecting AOC and the courts of North Carolina.

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

Section 2 would make 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 would also clarify that Article 62 of Chapter 7A applies to all JMARC regardless of funding source. This section would become effective August 1, 2025.

Section 3 would prohibit the use of modified AOC forms without proper notice that the form has been modified. This section would become effective when it becomes law and would apply to modified forms used on or after that date.

Section 4 would repeal 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 would become effective December 1, 2025, and would apply to applications for a name change filed on or after that date.

Section 5 would clarify 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 would be permitted to acknowledge a bond. Currently, only a clerk of court can acknowledge a bond. It would also clarify that a guardianship would terminate upon transfer to another state. This section would become effective December 1, 2025.

Section 6 would make technical changes and would require 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 would change the extension time to qualify or renounce as Executor or Administrator from 15 days to 20 days.

Accounts of an estate filed with the clerk of superior court would be required to contain certified copies of wills in any county where the decedent owned real estate after the will is probated. It would also clarify 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 would become effective December 1, 2025.

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Section 7 would clarify 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 would make a technical correction to remove a reference to a repealed statute.

Section 9 would modify 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 would become effective when it becomes law and would apply to service of process occurring on or after that date.

Section 10 would do the following related to juvenile custody:

- Add 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.
- Update G.S. 7B-1904 to facilitate the procedure in G.S. 15A-960 to remove a case from superior court back to juvenile court.
- Modify the process for release of an obligor from a juvenile's bond if the case is removed to juvenile court.

This section would become effective December 1, 2025, and apply to proceedings occurring on or after that date.

Section 11 would require 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 would be effective when it becomes law and would apply to orders issued on or after that date.

Section 12 would include retirement as a reason a judge may be unavailable in proceedings regarding judicial settlement. This section would become effective when it becomes law and apply to actions taken on or after that date.

Section 12.1 would allow the chief district court judge and senior resident superior court judge of their respective districts to establish rules to allow for the court's manual signature on orders of the court executed outside of court and fee application orders. This section would be effective when it becomes law and would expire two years after that date.

Section 12.2 would require AOC to prescribe rules for any training or educational material provided to jurors and would prohibit the court from providing jurors with any training or educational material not allowed under AOC rules. This section would become effective December 1, 2025, and would apply to training or educational material provided on or after that date.

Section 12.3 would modify G.S. 7A-95(c) to provide that except for original stenomask audio files and audio files of digital recording technicians, audio recordings created by court reporters would not be public records and could be disclosed to the parties or the public only to the extent allowed by a court order for good cause shown.

Section 12.4 would clarify 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 would be effective retroactively to September 9, 2024.

Section 12.5 would modify the mandatory retirement statutes for superior court judges and district court judges. Under current law, no superior court judge or district judge can continue in office beyond the last day of the month in which the judge attains 72 years of age. This section would allow superior court judges and district judges to continue serving until the last day of the calendar year in which the judge attains 72

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years of age. This section would be effective when it becomes law and would apply to judicial retirements on or after that date.

Section 13 would establish a procedure regarding the suspension, removal, or reinstatement of Clerks of Superior Court. This section would become effective when it becomes law and apply to proceedings based upon clerk conduct occurring on or after that date.

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

Section 15 would grant the AOC Director the authority to create an official flag, seal, and other emblems of the judicial branch. Section 15 would also direct the AOC Director to implement any program and disburse any expenditure authorized by the Conference of District Attorneys and to provide quarterly reports on certain expenses to the Conference of District Attorneys.

Section 15.1 would allow the Conference of District Attorneys to authorize any expenditure or adjustment to any funds appropriated by the General Assembly for the Conference and the offices of district attorneys or any other funds for the creation of paid internships, training, and additional services, personnel, and other expenditures authorized by law. The AOC would disburse expenditures so authorized and provide quarterly reports to the Conference.

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

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

Section 18 would modify mediation statutes by specifying that proceedings for abuse, neglect, or dependency of a juvenile under Chapter 7B of the General Statutes, or proceedings for abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an adult under Articles 6 or 6A of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes, are excluded from the proceedings in which evidence of statements made and conduct occurring in a mediated settlement are not subject to discovery. Similarly, these proceedings would not be included in proceedings where a mediator, other neutral, or neutral observer shall not be compelled to testify or produce evidence.

Section 19 would clarify the authority of a senior resident superior court judge in the event of disability of another judge. It would also require 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 would grant the North Carolina State Bar the authority to discipline out of state attorneys practicing law in North Carolina.

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

Section 22 would provide a severability clause.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, this act would become effective when it becomes law.

** Hannah Kendrick, Staff Attorney for the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*