

Article 41.

Quo Warranto.

§ 1-514. Writs of sci. fa. and quo warranto abolished.

The writs of scire facias and of quo warranto, and proceedings by information in the nature of quo warranto, are abolished; and the remedies obtainable in those forms may be obtained by civil actions under this Article. To the extent that rules of procedure are not provided for in this Article, the Rules of Civil Procedure shall apply. (R.C., c. 26, ss. 5, 25; C.C.P., s. 362; Code, s. 603; Rev., s. 286; C.S., s. 869; 1967, c. 954, s. 3.)

§ 1-515. Action by Attorney General.

An action may be brought by the Attorney General in the name of the State, upon his own information or upon the complaint of a private party, against the party offending, in the following cases:

- (1) When a person usurps, intrudes into, or unlawfully holds or exercises any public office, civil or military, or any franchise within this State, or any office in a corporation created by the authority of this State; or,
- (2) When a public officer, civil or military, has done or suffered an act which, by law, makes a forfeiture of his office.
- (3) When any person, natural or corporate, has or claims to have or hold any rights or franchises by reason of a grant or otherwise, in violation of the provisions of G.S. 146-39. (C.C.P., s. 366; Code, s. 607; Rev., s. 827; 1911, cc. 195, 201; C.S., s. 870; 1983, c. 768, s. 1.)

§ 1-516. Action by private person with leave.

When application is made to the Attorney General by a private relator to bring such an action, he shall grant leave that it may be brought in the name of the State, upon the relation of such applicant, upon the applicant tendering to the Attorney General satisfactory security to indemnify the State against all costs and expenses which may accrue in consequence of the action. (1874-5, c. 76; 1881, c. 330; Code, s. 608; Rev., s. 828; C.S., s. 871.)

§ 1-517. Solvent sureties required.

The Attorney General, before granting leave to a private relator to bring a suit to try the title to an office, may require two sureties to the bond required by law to be filed to indemnify the State against costs and expenses, and require such sureties to justify, and may require such proof and evidence of the solvency of the sureties as is satisfactory to him. (1901, c. 595, s. 2; Rev., s. 829; C.S., s. 872.)

§ 1-518. Leave withdrawn and action dismissed for insufficient bond.

When the Attorney General has granted leave to a private relator to bring an action in the name of the State to try the title to an office, and it afterwards is shown to the satisfaction of the Attorney General that the bond filed by the private relator is insufficient, or that the sureties are insolvent, the Attorney General may recall and revoke such leave, and upon a certificate of the withdrawal and revocation by the Attorney General to the clerk of the court of the county where the action is pending, it is the duty of the presiding judge, upon motion of the defendant, to dismiss the action. (1891, c. 595; Rev., s. 830; C.S., s. 873.)

§ 1-519. Arrest and bail of defendant usurping office.

When action is brought against a person for usurping an office, the Attorney General, in addition to the statement of the cause of action, may set forth in the complaint the name of the person rightfully entitled to the office, with a statement of his right thereto; and in such case, upon proof by affidavit that the defendant has received fees or emoluments belonging to and by means of his usurpation of the office, an order shall be granted by a judge of the superior court for the arrest of the defendant, and holding him to bail; and thereupon he shall be arrested and held to bail in the same manner, and with the same effect, and subject to the same rights and liabilities, as in other civil actions where the defendant is subject to arrest. (C.C.P., s. 369; 1883, c. 102; Code, s. 609; Rev., s. 831; C.S., s. 874.)

§ 1-520. Several claims tried in one action.

Where several persons claim to be entitled to the same office or franchise, one action may be brought against all of them, in order to try their respective rights to the office or franchise. (C.C.P., s. 374; Code, s. 614; Rev., s. 832; C.S., s. 875.)

§ 1-521. Trials expedited.

All actions to try the title or right to any State, county or municipal office shall stand for trial at the next session of court after the summons and complaint have been served for 30 days, regardless of whether issues were joined more than 10 days before the session; and it is the duty of the judge to expedite the trial of these actions and to give them precedence over all others, civil or criminal. It is unlawful to appropriate any public funds to the payment of counsel fees in any such action. (1874-5, c. 173; Code, s. 616; 1901, c. 42; Rev., s. 833; C.S., s. 876; 1947, c. 781; 1971, c. 381, s. 12.)

§ 1-522. Time for bringing action.

All actions brought by a private relator, upon the leave of the Attorney General, to try the title to an office must be brought, and a copy of the complaint served on the defendant, within ninety days after his induction into the office to which the title is to be tried; and when it appears from the papers in the cause, or is otherwise shown to the satisfaction of the court, that the summons and complaint have not been served within ninety days, it is the duty of the judge upon motion of defendant to dismiss the action at any time before the trial, at the cost of the plaintiff. (1901, c. 519; 1903, c. 556; Rev., s. 834; C.S., s. 877.)

§ 1-523. Defendant's undertaking before answer.

Before the defendant may answer or demur to the complaint he must execute and file in the superior court clerk's office of the county wherein the suit is pending, an undertaking, with good and sufficient surety, in the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200.00), which may be increased from time to time in the discretion of the judge, to be void upon condition that the defendant pays to the plaintiff all such costs and damages, including damages for the loss of such fees and emoluments as may or ought to have come into the hands of the defendant, as the plaintiff may recover. (1895, c. 105; Rev., s. 835; C.S., s. 878.)

§ 1-524. Possession of office not disturbed pending trial.

(a) In any civil action pending in any of the courts of this State in which the title to an office is involved, the defendant being in the possession of the office and discharging the duties thereof

shall continue therein pending the action, and no judge shall make a restraining order interfering with or enjoining such officer in the premises. The officer shall, notwithstanding any such order, continue to exercise the duties of the office pending the litigation, and receive the emoluments thereof.

(b) This section shall not apply to any person subject to Article 31B of Chapter 7A of the General Statutes. (1899, c. 33; Rev., s. 836; C.S., s. 879; 2007-104, s. 2.)

§ 1-525. Judgment by default and inquiry on failure of defendant to give bond.

At any time after a duly verified complaint is filed alleging facts sufficient to entitle plaintiff to the office, whether this complaint is filed at the beginning of the action or later, the plaintiff may, upon ten days' notice to the defendant or his attorney of record, move before the judge resident in or riding the district, at chambers, to require the defendant to give the undertaking specified in G.S. 1-523. It is the duty of the judge to require the defendant to give the undertaking within ten days, and if it is not so given, the judge shall render judgment in favor of plaintiff and against defendant for the recovery of the office and the costs, and a judgment by default and inquiry to be executed at a term for damages, including loss of fees and salary. Upon the filing of the judgment for the recovery of such office with the clerk, it is his duty to issue and the sheriff's duty to serve the necessary process to put the plaintiff into possession of the office. If the defendant shall give the undertaking, the court, if judgment is rendered for plaintiff, shall render judgment against the defendant and his sureties for costs and damages, including loss of fees and salary. Nothing herein prevents the judge's extending, for cause, the time in which to give the undertaking. (1895, c. 105, s. 2; 1899, c. 49; Rev., s. 837; C.S., s. 880.)

§ 1-526. Service of summons and complaint.

The service of the summons and complaint as hereinbefore provided may be made by leaving a copy at the last residence or business office of the defendant or defendants, and service so made shall be deemed a legal service. (1899, c. 126; Rev., s. 838; C.S., s. 881.)

§ 1-527. Judgment in such actions.

In every such case judgment shall be rendered upon the right of the defendant, and also upon the right of the party alleged to be entitled, or only upon the right of the defendant, as justice requires. When the defendant, whether a natural person or corporation, against whom the action has been brought, is adjudged guilty of usurping or intruding into, or unlawfully holding or exercising any office, franchise or privilege, judgment shall be rendered that the defendant be excluded from such office, franchise or privilege, and also that the plaintiff recover costs against him. The court may also, in its discretion, fine the defendant a sum not exceeding two thousand dollars (\$2000). The clear proceeds of the fine shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2. (Const., Art. IX, s. 5; R.C., c. 95; C.C.P., ss. 370, 375; Code, ss. 610, 615; Rev., ss. 839, 840; C.S., s. 882; 1998-215, s. 95.)

§ 1-528. Mandamus to aid relator.

In any civil action brought to try the title or right to hold any office, when the judgment of the court is in favor of the relator in the action, it is the duty of the court to issue a writ of mandamus or such other process as is necessary and proper to carry the judgment into effect, and to induct the party entitled into office. (1885, c. 406, s. 1; Rev., s. 841; C.S., s. 883.)

§ 1-529. Appeal; bonds of parties.

No appeal by the defendant to the appellate division from the judgment of the superior court in such action shall stay the execution of the judgment, unless a justified undertaking is executed on the part of the appellant by one or more sureties, in a sum to be fixed by the court, conditioned that the appellant will pay to the party entitled to the same the salary, fees, emoluments and all moneys whatsoever received by the appellant by virtue or under color of the office. In no event shall the judgment be executed pending appeal, unless a justified undertaking is executed on the part of the appellee by one or more persons in a sum to be fixed by the court, conditioned that the appellee will pay to the party entitled to the same the salary, fees, emoluments and all moneys whatsoever received by the appellee by virtue or under color of office during his occupancy thereof. (1885, c. 406, s. 2; Rev., s. 842; C.S., s. 884; 1969, c. 44, s. 13.)

§ 1-530. Relator inducted into office; duty.

If the judgment is rendered in favor of the person alleged to be entitled, he shall be entitled, after taking the oath of office and executing such official bond as may be required by law, to take upon himself the execution of the office. It is his duty, immediately thereafter, to demand of the defendant in the action all the books and papers in his custody, or within his power, belonging to the office from which he has been excluded. (C.C.P., ss. 371, 373; Code, ss. 611, 613; Rev., ss. 843, 844; C.S., s. 885.)

§ 1-531. Refusal to surrender official papers misdemeanor.

If a person against whom a judgment has been rendered in an action brought to recover a public office shall fail or refuse to turn over, on demand, to the person adjudged to be entitled to such office, all papers, documents and books belonging to such office, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (C.C.P., s. 372; Code, s. 612; Rev., s. 3601; C.S., s. 886; 1993, c. 539, s. 2; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

§ 1-532. Action to recover property forfeited to State.

When any property, real or personal, is forfeited to the State, or to any officer for its use, an action for the recovery of such property, alleging the grounds of the forfeiture, may be brought by the proper officer in any superior court. (C.C.P., s. 381; Code, s. 621; Rev., s. 845; C.S., s. 887.)