

SUBCHAPTER III. SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION OF THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

Article 7.

Organization.

§ 7A-40. Composition; judicial powers of clerk.

The Superior Court Division of the General Court of Justice consists of the several superior courts of the State. The clerk of superior court in the exercise of the judicial power conferred upon him as ex officio judge of probate, and in the exercise of other judicial powers conferred upon him by law in respect of special proceedings and the administration of guardianships and trusts, is a judicial officer of the Superior Court Division, and not a separate court. (1965, c. 310, s. 1; 1967, c. 691, s. 1; 1969, c. 1190, s. 4; 1971, c. 377, s. 4.)

§ 7A-40.1. Age limit for service as superior court judge; exception.

No superior court judge may continue in office beyond the last day of the month in which the superior court judge attains 72 years of age, but superior court judges so retired may be recalled for periods of temporary service as provided in this Subchapter. (2023-134, s. 16.14(f).)

§ 7A-41. Superior court divisions and districts; judges.

(a) **(Effective until January 1, 2025)** The counties of the State are organized into judicial divisions and superior court districts, and each superior court district has the counties, and the number of regular resident superior court judges set forth in the following table, and for districts of less than a whole county, as set out in subsection (b) of this section:

Judicial Division	Superior Court District	Counties	No. of Resident Judges
First	1	Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Pasquotank, Perquimans	2
First	2	Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrrell, Washington	1
First	3	Pitt	2
Second	4	Carteret, Craven, Pamlico	3
Second	5	Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Sampson	2
Second	6A	(part of New Hanover, Pender see subsection (b))	1
Second	6B	(part of New Hanover, see subsection (b))	1
Second	6C	(part of New Hanover, see subsection (b))	1
First	7A	Halifax	1

First	7B	Bertie, Hertford, Northampton	1
First	8A	Nash	1
First	8B	(part of Edgecombe, part of Wilson, see subsection (b))	1
First	8C	(part of Edgecombe, part of Wilson, see subsection (b))	1
Second	9A	Lenoir and Greene	1
Second	9B	Wayne	1
Third	10A	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10B	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10C	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10D	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10E	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10F	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
First	11	Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, Warren	2
Third	12	Harnett, Lee	1
Third	13	Johnston	2
Third	14A	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	1
Third	14B	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	1
Third	14C	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	2
Second	15A	Bladen, Columbus	1
Second	15B	Brunswick	1
First	16A	(part of Durham, see subsection (b))	1
First	16B	(part of Durham, see subsection (b))	3
Third	17	Alamance	2
Fourth	18	Chatham, Orange	2
Fifth	19	Catawba	2
Second	20	Robeson	2
Third	21	Anson, Richmond, Scotland	2

Fourth	22	Caswell, Rockingham	2
Fourth	23	Stokes, Surry	1
Fourth	24A	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24B	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24C	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24D	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24E	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	25	Cabarrus	1
Fifth	26A	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26B	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26C	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26D	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26E	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26F	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26G	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26H	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	27	Rowan	1
Third	28	Montgomery, Stanly	2
Third	29	Hoke, Moore	2
Third	30	Union	2
Fourth	31A	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	2
Fourth	31B	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	31C	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	31D	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	32	Alexander, Iredell	2
Fourth	33	Davidson, Davie	2
Fourth	34	Alleghany, Ashe, Wilkes, Yadkin	1
Fifth	35	Avery, Madison,	2

		Mitchell,	
		Watauga, Yancey	
Fifth	36	Burke, Caldwell	2
Third	37	Randolph	2
Fifth	38	Gaston	2
Fifth	39	Cleveland, Lincoln	2
Fifth	40	Buncombe	2
Fifth	41	McDowell,	1
		Rutherford	
Fifth	42	Henderson, Polk,	1
		Transylvania	
Fifth	43A	Cherokee, Clay,	1
		Graham, Macon,	
		Swain	
Fifth	43B	Haywood, Jackson	1.

(a) **(Effective January 1, 2025)** The counties of the State are organized into judicial divisions and superior court districts, and each superior court district has the counties, and the number of regular resident superior court judges set forth in the following table, and for districts of less than a whole county, as set out in subsection (b) of this section:

Judicial Division	Superior Court District	Counties	No. of Resident Judges
First	1	Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Pasquotank, Perquimans	2
First	2	Beaufort, Hyde, Martin, Tyrrell, Washington	2
First	3	Pitt	2
Second	4	Carteret, Craven, Pamlico	3
Second	5	Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Sampson	2
Second	6A	(part of New Hanover, Pender see subsection (b))	1
Second	6B	(part of New Hanover, see subsection (b))	1
Second	6C	(part of New Hanover, see subsection (b))	1
First	7A	Halifax	1
First	7B	Bertie, Hertford, Northampton	1
First	8A	Nash	1

First	8B	(part of Edgecombe, part of Wilson, see subsection (b))	1
First	8C	(part of Wilson, part of Edgecombe, see subsection (b))	1
Second	9A	Lenoir and Greene	1
Second	9B	Wayne	1
Third	10A	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10B	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10C	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10D	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10E	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
Third	10F	(part of Wake, see subsection (b))	1
First	11	Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance, Warren	2
Third	12	Harnett, Lee	1
Third	13	Johnston	2
Third	14A	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	1
Third	14B	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	1
Third	14C	(part of Cumberland, see subsection (b))	2
Second	15A	Bladen, Columbus	1
Second	15B	Brunswick	1
First	16A	(part of Durham, see subsection (b))	1
First	16B	(part of Durham, see subsection (b))	3
Third	17	Alamance	2
Fourth	18	Chatham, Orange	2
Fifth	19	Catawba	2
Second	20	Robeson	2
Third	21	Anson, Richmond, Scotland	2
Fourth	22	Caswell, Rockingham	2
Fourth	23	Stokes, Surry	1
Fourth	24A	(part of Guilford,	1

		see subsection (b))	
Fourth	24B	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24C	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24D	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	24E	(part of Guilford, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	25	Cabarrus	1
Fifth	26A	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26B	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26C	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26D	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26E	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26F	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26G	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fifth	26H	(part of Mecklenburg, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	27	Rowan	1
Third	28	Montgomery, Stanly	2
Third	29	Hoke, Moore	2
Third	30	Union	2
Fourth	31A	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	2
Fourth	31B	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	31C	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	31D	(part of Forsyth, see subsection (b))	1
Fourth	32	Alexander, Iredell	2
Fourth	33	Davidson, Davie	2
Fourth	34	Alleghany, Ashe, Wilkes, Yadkin	1
Fifth	35	Avery, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, Yancey	2
Fifth	36	Burke, Caldwell	2

Third	37	Randolph	2
Fifth	38	Gaston	3
Fifth	39	Cleveland, Lincoln	2
Fifth	40	Buncombe	2
Fifth	41	McDowell, Rutherford	1
Fifth	42	Henderson, Polk, Transylvania	1
Fifth	43A	Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, Swain	1
Fifth	43B	Haywood, Jackson	1.

(b) For superior court districts of less than a whole county, or with part of one county with part of another, the composition of the district and the number of judges is as follows:

- (1) District 6A: New Hanover County: VTD CF01, VTD CF02, VTD CF03, VTD H01, VTD W25, VTD W27; Pender County. It has one judge.
- (2) District 6B: New Hanover County: VTD H02, VTD H03, VTD H04, VTD H05, VTD H06, VTD H07, VTD H08, VTD H09, VTD M02, VTD M05, VTD W13, VTD W18, VTD W24, VTD W28, VTD WB. It has one judge.
- (3) District 6C: New Hanover County: VTD FP01, VTD FP02, VTD FP03, VTD FP04, VTD FP05, VTD M03, VTD M04, VTD W03, VTD W08, VTD W12, VTD W15, VTD W16, VTD W17, VTD W21, VTD W26, VTD W29, VTD W30, VTD W31. It has one judge.
- (4) District 8B: Edgecombe County: VTD: 1101: Block(s) 0650213001035; VTD: 1201, VTD: 1202, VTD: 1203, VTD: 1204, VTD: 1205: Block(s) 0650203001005, 0650203001006, 0650203001007, 0650203001008, 0650203001009, 0650203001010, 0650203001011, 0650203001012, 0650203001013, 0650203001014, 0650203001015, 0650203001016, 0650203001017, 0650204001000, 0650204001001, 0650204001002, 0650204001003, 0650204001004, 0650204001005, 0650204001006, 0650204001007, 0650204001008, 0650204001009, 0650204001010, 0650204001011, 0650204001012, 0650204001013, 0650204001014, 0650204001015, 0650204001016, 0650204001017, 0650204001018, 0650204001019, 0650204001020, 0650204001021, 0650204001022, 0650204001023, 0650204001024, 0650204001025, 0650204001026, 0650204001027, 0650204001028, 0650204001029, 0650204001030, 0650204001031, 0650204001032, 0650204001033, 0650204001034, 0650204001035, 0650204001036, 0650204001037, 0650204001038, 0650204001039, 0650204001040, 0650204001041, 0650204001042, 0650204001043, 0650204001044, 0650204001045, 0650204001046, 0650204001047, 0650204001048, 0650204001049, 0650204002000, 0650204002001, 0650204002002, 0650204002003, 0650204002004, 0650204002005, 0650204002006, 0650204002007, 0650204002008, 0650204002009, 0650204002010, 0650204002011, 0650204002012, 0650204002013, 0650204002014, 0650204002015, 0650204002016, 0650204002017, 0650204002018, 0650204002019, 0650204002020,

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 has one judge.

- (5) District 8C: Edgecombe County: VTD: 0101, VTD: 0102, VTD: 0103, VTD: 0104, VTD: 0201, VTD: 0301, VTD: 0401, VTD: 0501, VTD: 0601, VTD: 0701, VTD: 0801, VTD: 0901, VTD: 1001, VTD: 1101: Block(s)
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judge.

- (6) Superior Court District 10A consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 01-01,
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04-20, VTD: 04-21, VTD: 11-02, VTD: 18-01, VTD: 18-04, VTD: 18-06,
VTD: 18-08. It has one judge.
- (7) Superior Court District 10B consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 01-12,
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- (8) Superior Court District 10C consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 02-01,
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judge.
- (9) Superior Court District 10D consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 01-03,
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- (10) Superior Court District 10E consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 01-28,
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(11) Superior Court District 10F consists of Wake County Precincts: VTD: 03-00, VTD: 06-01, VTD: 06-04, VTD: 06-05, VTD: 06-06, VTD: 06-07, VTD: 12-01, VTD: 12-02, VTD: 12-04, VTD: 12-05, VTD: 12-06, VTD: 12-07, VTD: 12-08, VTD: 12-09, VTD: 15-02, VTD: 18-02, VTD: 18-03, VTD: 18-05, VTD: 18-07, VTD: 20-01, VTD: 20-03, VTD: 20-05, VTD: 20-06, VTD: 20-08, VTD: 20-09, VTD: 20-11, VTD: 20-12. It has one judge.

(12) District 14A: Cumberland County: VTD: AH49, VTD: CC18: Block(s) 0510007011012, 0510007011013, 0510007011014, 0510007011015, 0510007011016, 0510007011021, 0510007011034, 0510007011035, 0510007013011, 0510007013012, 0510007013013, 0510007013014, 0510007013015, 0510007013016, 0510007013017, 0510007013018, 0510007013019, 0510007013020, 0510007013021, 0510007013022, 0510007013023, 0510007013024, 0510007013025, 0510007013026, 0510007013027, 0510007013028, 0510007013029, 0510007013030, 0510007013031, 0510007013032, 0510007022007, 0510007022008; VTD: CC24: 0510020011058, 0510020021002, 0510033022004; VTD: CC25, VTD: CC27, VTD: CC29, VTD: CC31, VTD: CC32, VTD: CC33, VTD: CC34, VTD: CU02, VTD: G10: Block(s) 0510016011001, 0510016011002, 0510016011004, 0510016011005, 0510016011006, 0510016011007, 0510016011009, 0510016011010, 0510016011011, 0510016011012, 0510016011013, 0510016011014, 0510016011015, 0510016011016, 0510016011017, 0510016011018, 0510016011019, 0510016011020, 0510016011021, 0510016011022, 0510016011023, 0510016011024, 0510016011025, 0510016011026, 0510016011027, 0510016011032, 0510016011041, 0510016012041, 0510031021000, 0510031021001, 0510031021002, 0510031021003, 0510031021004, 0510031021005, 0510031021006, 0510031021007, 0510031021008, 0510031021009, 0510031021010, 0510031021011, 0510031021012, 0510031021013, 0510031021014, 0510031021015, 0510031021016, 0510031021017, 0510031021018, 0510031021019, 0510031021020, 0510031021021, 0510031021022, 0510031021023, 0510031021024, 0510031021025, 0510031021026, 0510031021027, 0510031021028, 0510031021029, 0510031021030, 0510031021031, 0510031021032, 0510031021033, 0510031021034, 0510031021035, 0510031021036, 0510031021037, 0510031021038, 0510031021039, 0510031021040, 0510031021041, 0510031021042, 0510031021043, 0510031021044, 0510031021045,

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VTD: SH77. It has two judges.

- (15) District 16A: Durham County: VTD: 09, VTD: 12, VTD: 13, VTD: 14, VTD:
15, VTD: 18, VTD: 31: Block(s) 0630010013033, 0630018024009; VTD: 34,
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- (16) District 16B: Durham County: VTD: 01, VTD: 02, VTD: 03, VTD: 04, VTD: 05, VTD: 06, VTD: 07, VTD: 08, VTD: 10, VTD: 16, VTD: 17, VTD: 19, VTD: 20, VTD: 21, VTD: 22, VTD: 23, VTD: 24, VTD: 25, VTD: 26, VTD: 27, VTD: 28, VTD: 29, VTD: 30-1, VTD: 30-2, VTD: 31: Block(s) 0630010013034, 0630010013038, 0630010013039, 0630010013040, 0630010013043, 0630018071037, 0630018071038, 0630018091000, 0630018091001, 0630018091002, 0630018091003, 0630018091004, 0630018091005, 0630018091006, 0630018091007, 0630018091008, 0630018091009, 0630018091010, 0630018091011, 0630018091012, 0630018091013, 0630018091014, 0630018091015, 0630018091016, 0630018091017, 0630018091018, 0630018091019, 0630018091020, 0630018091021, 0630018091022, 0630018091023, 0630018091024, 0630018091025, 0630018091026, 0630018091027, 0630018091028, 0630018091029, 0630018091030, 0630018091031, 0630018091032, 0630018091033, 0630018091034, 0630018091035, 0630018091036, 0630018091037, 0630018091038, 0630018091041, 0630018091042, 0630018091043, 0630018091044, 0630018091045, 0630018091046, 0630018091062, 0630018091063, 0630018091064, 0630018091065, 0630018091066, 0630018091067, 0630018091071, 0630018091072, 0630018091073, 0630018091074, 0630018091077, 0630018091079, 0630018091080, 0630018092000, 0630018092001, 0630018092002, 0630018092003, 0630018092004, 0630018092005, 0630018092006, 0630018092007, 0630018092008, 0630018092009, 0630018092010, 0630018092011, 0630018092012, 0630018092013, 0630018092014, 0630018092015, 0630018092016, 0630018092017, 0630018092018, 0630018092019, 0630018092020, 0630018092021, 0630018092022, 0630018092023, 0630018092024, 0630018092027, 0630018092028, 0630018092029, 0630018092030, 0630018092031, 0630018092032, 0630018092033, 0630020271000, 0630020271001, 0630020271002, 0630020271003, 0630020271004, 0630020271005, 0630020271006, 0630020271007, 0630020271008, 0630020271009, 0630020271010, 0630020271011, 0630020271012, 0630020271013, 0630020271014, 0630020271015, 0630020271016, 0630020271017, 0630020271018, 0630020271019, 0630020271020, 0630020271021, 0630020271022, 0630020271023, 0630020271024, 0630020271025, 0630020271054, 0630020271055, 0630020271063, 0630020271064, 0630020271065, 0630020271067, 0630020271070, 0630020271071, 0639801001012, 0639801001013; VTD: 32, VTD: 33, VTD: 35: Block(s) 0630020131000, 0630020131001, 0630020131002, 0630020131003, 0630020131004, 0630020131005, 0630020131006, 0630020131007, 0630020131008, 0630020131009, 0630020131010, 0630020131011, 0630020131012, 0630020131013, 0630020131014, 0630020132000, 0630020132001, 0630020132002, 0630020132003, 0630020132004, 0630020132005, 0630020132006, 0630020132007, 0630020132008, 0630020132009, 0630020132010,

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38, VTD: 39, VTD: 43, VTD: 44, VTD: 45, VTD: 46, VTD: 47, VTD: 50, VTD:
51, VTD: 52, VTD: 53-2. It has three judges.

- (17) District 24A: Guilford County: VTD: FEN1, VTD: FEN2, VTD: G04, VTD:
G05, VTD: G06, VTD: G46, VTD: G52, VTD: G67, VTD: G68, VTD: G69,
VTD: G70, VTD: G71, VTD: G72, VTD: G73, VTD: G74, VTD: G75, VTD:
NCLAY1, VTD: NCLAY2, VTD: PG1, VTD: PG2, VTD: SCLAY. It has one
judge.
- (18) District 24B: Guilford County: VTD: H01, VTD: H02, VTD: H03, VTD: H04,
VTD: H05, VTD: H06, VTD: H07, VTD: H08, VTD: H09, VTD: H10, VTD:
H11, VTD: H12, VTD: H13, VTD: H14, VTD: H15, VTD: H16, VTD: H17,
VTD: H18, VTD: H19A, VTD: H19B, VTD: H20A, VTD: H20B, VTD: H21,
VTD: H22, VTD: H23, VTD: H24, VTD: H25, VTD: H26, VTD: H27, VTD:
HP, VTD: JAM1, VTD: JAM5, VTD: NDRI, VTD: SDRI. It has one judge.
- (19) District 24C: Guilford County: VTD: CG1, VTD: CG2, VTD: CG3A, VTD:
CG3B, VTD: FR1, VTD: FR2, VTD: FR3, VTD: FR4, VTD: FR5, VTD: G17,
VTD: G30, VTD: G31, VTD: G32, VTD: G33, VTD: G34, VTD: G36, VTD:
G37, VTD: G38, VTD: G39, VTD: G40A1, VTD: G40A2, VTD: G40B, VTD:
G41, VTD: G42, VTD: G43, VTD: G64, VTD: G65, VTD: G66, VTD: JAM2,
VTD: JAM3, VTD: JAM4, VTD: MON3, VTD: NCGR1, VTD: NCGR2, VTD:
OR1, VTD: OR2, VTD: SF1, VTD: SF2, VTD: SF3, VTD: SF4, VTD: STOK.
It has one judge.

- (20) District 24D: Guilford County: VTD: G01, VTD: G11, VTD: G12, VTD: G13, VTD: G14, VTD: G15, VTD: G16, VTD: G19, VTD: G35, VTD: G44, VTD: G45, VTD: G47, VTD: G48, VTD: G49, VTD: G50, VTD: G51, VTD: G53, VTD: G54, VTD: G55, VTD: G56, VTD: G57, VTD: G58, VTD: G59, VTD: G60, VTD: G61, VTD: G62, VTD: G63, VTD: SUM1, VTD: SUM2, VTD: SUM3, VTD: SUM4. It has one judge.
- (21) District 24E: Guilford County: VTD: G02, VTD: G03, VTD: G07, VTD: G08, VTD: G09, VTD: G10, VTD: G18, VTD: G20, VTD: G21, VTD: G22, VTD: G23, VTD: G24, VTD: G25, VTD: G26, VTD: G27, VTD: G28, VTD: G29, VTD: GIB, VTD: GR, VTD: JEF1, VTD: JEF2, VTD: JEF3, VTD: JEF4, VTD: MON1, VTD: MON2, VTD: NMAD, VTD: NWASH, VTD: RC1, VTD: RC2, VTD: SMAD, VTD: SWASH. It has one judge.
- (22) District 31A: Forsyth County: VTD: 051, VTD: 052, VTD: 053, VTD: 054, VTD: 055, VTD: 071, VTD: 072, VTD: 073, VTD: 074, VTD: 075, VTD: 091, VTD: 092, VTD: 122, VTD: 123, VTD: 131, VTD: 132, VTD: 133, VTD: 701, VTD: 702, VTD: 703, VTD: 704, VTD: 705, VTD: 706, VTD: 707, VTD: 708, VTD: 709, VTD: 806, VTD: 807, VTD: 808. It has one judge.
- (23) District 31B: Forsyth County: VTD: 042, VTD: 043, VTD: 501, VTD: 502, VTD: 503, VTD: 504, VTD: 505, VTD: 506, VTD: 507, VTD: 601, VTD: 602, VTD: 603, VTD: 604, VTD: 605, VTD: 606, VTD: 607, VTD: 901, VTD: 902, VTD: 903, VTD: 904, VTD: 905, VTD: 907. It has one judge.
- (24) District 31C: Forsyth County: VTD: 011, VTD: 012, VTD: 013, VTD: 014, VTD: 015, VTD: 021, VTD: 031, VTD: 032, VTD: 033, VTD: 034, VTD: 061, VTD: 062, VTD: 063, VTD: 064, VTD: 065, VTD: 066, VTD: 067, VTD: 068, VTD: 101, VTD: 111, VTD: 112, VTD: 801, VTD: 802, VTD: 803, VTD: 804, VTD: 805, VTD: 809, VTD: 906, VTD: 908, VTD: 909. It has one judge.
- (25) District 31D: Forsyth County: VTD: 081, VTD: 082, VTD: 083, VTD: 201, VTD: 203, VTD: 204, VTD: 205, VTD: 206, VTD: 207, VTD: 301, VTD: 302, VTD: 303, VTD: 304, VTD: 305, VTD: 306, VTD: 401, VTD: 402, VTD: 403, VTD: 404, VTD: 405. It has one judge.
- (26) District 26A: Mecklenburg County: VTD 001, VTD 008, VTD 018, VTD 019, VTD 032, VTD 035, VTD 036, VTD 047, VTD 048, VTD 057, VTD 067, VTD 069, VTD 071, VTD 074, VTD 091, VTD 096, VTD 103, VTD 106, VTD 113, VTD 119, VTD 136, VTD 215, VTD 216, VTD 217, VTD 218, VTD 219, VTD 220, VTD 221, VTD 233, VTD 234, VTD 236. It has one judge.
- (27) District 26B: Mecklenburg County: VTD 070, VTD 072, VTD 073, VTD 075, VTD 076, VTD 086, VTD 087, VTD 088, VTD 090, VTD 092, VTD 093, VTD 100, VTD 101, VTD 110, VTD 111, VTD 112, VTD 114, VTD 118, VTD 121, VTD 131, VTD 137, VTD 139.1, VTD 140, VTD 144, VTD 226, VTD 227, VTD 232. It has one judge.
- (28) District 26C: Mecklenburg County: VTD 127, VTD 133, VTD 134, VTD 142, VTD 143, VTD 150, VTD 151, VTD 202, VTD 206, VTD 207, VTD 208, VTD 209, VTD 223.1, VTD 224, VTD 240, VTD 241, VTD 242. It has one judge.
- (29) District 26D: Mecklenburg County: VTD 037, VTD 038, VTD 049, VTD 050, VTD 051, VTD 058, VTD 059, VTD 077, VTD 097, VTD 098, VTD 120, VTD

122, VTD 129, VTD 138, VTD 147, VTD 148, VTD 225, VTD 228, VTD 229, VTD 230, VTD 231, VTD 243. It has one judge.

- (30) District 26E: Mecklenburg County: VTD 002, VTD 005, VTD 007, VTD 009, VTD 010, VTD 012, VTD 013, VTD 014, VTD 016, VTD 017, VTD 020, VTD 021, VTD 022, VTD 023, VTD 024, VTD 025, VTD 029, VTD 031, VTD 039, VTD 040, VTD 041, VTD 046, VTD 052, VTD 053, VTD 078.1, VTD 079, VTD 080, VTD 081, VTD 109, VTD 200. It has one judge.
- (31) District 26F: Mecklenburg County: VTD 011, VTD 015, VTD 026, VTD 027, VTD 028, VTD 030, VTD 042, VTD 044, VTD 054, VTD 055, VTD 056, VTD 082, VTD 089, VTD 128, VTD 135, VTD 210, VTD 211, VTD 213, VTD 214, VTD 222, VTD 238.1. It has one judge.
- (32) District 26G: Mecklenburg County: VTD 003, VTD 004, VTD 043, VTD 060, VTD 061, VTD 104, VTD 105, VTD 107.1, VTD 123, VTD 126, VTD 132, VTD 141, VTD 145, VTD 146, VTD 149, VTD 204.1, VTD 212, VTD 237, VTD 239. It has one judge.
- (33) District 26H: Mecklenburg County: VTD 006, VTD 033, VTD 034, VTD 045, VTD 062, VTD 063, VTD 064, VTD 065, VTD 066, VTD 068, VTD 083, VTD 084, VTD 085, VTD 094, VTD 095, VTD 099, VTD 102, VTD 108, VTD 115, VTD 116, VTD 117, VTD 124, VTD 125, VTD 130, VTD 201, VTD 203, VTD 205, VTD 235. It has one judge.

(b1) The qualified voters of District 5 shall elect all judges established for District 5 in subsection (a) of this section, but only persons who reside in Onslow County may be candidates for one of the judgeships and only persons who reside in Duplin, Jones, or Sampson County may be candidates for the remaining judgeship.

(c) In subsection (b) above, the names and boundaries of voting tabulation districts, tracts, block groups, and blocks specified in this section are as shown on the 2010 Census Redistricting TIGER/Line Shapefiles.

(c1) If any voting tabulation district boundary is changed, that change shall not change the boundary of a judicial district, which shall remain the same as it is depicted by the 2010 Census Redistricting TIGER/Line Shapefiles.

(c2) The Legislative Services Officer shall certify a true copy of the block assignment file associated with any mapping software used to generate the language in subsection (b) of this section. The certified true copy of the block assignment file shall be delivered by the Legislative Services Officer to the Principal Clerk of the Senate and the Principal Clerk of the House of Representatives. If any area within North Carolina is not assigned to a specific district by subsection (b) of this section, the certified true copy of the block assignment file delivered to the Principal Clerk of the Senate and the Principal Clerk of the House of Representatives shall control.

(d) The several judges, their terms of office, and their assignments to districts are as follows:

- (1) In the first superior court district, J. Herbert Small and Thomas S. Watts serve terms expiring December 31, 1994.
- (2) In the second superior court district, William C. Griffin serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (3) In the third-A superior court district, David E. Reid serves a term expiring on December 31, 1992.

- (4) In the third-B superior court district, Herbert O. Phillips, III, serves a term expiring on December 31, 1994.
- (5) In the fourth-A superior court district, Henry L. Stevens, III, serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (6) In the fourth-B superior court district, James R. Strickland serves a term expiring December 31, 1992.
- (7) In the fifth superior court district, no election shall be held in 1992 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Bradford Tillery, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The succeeding term begins January 1, 1995. In the fifth superior court district, Napoleon B. Barefoot serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (8) In the sixth-A superior court district, Richard B. Allsbrook serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (9) In the sixth-B superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
- (10) In the seventh-A superior court district, Charles B. Winberry, serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (11) In the seventh-B superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
- (12) In the seventh-C superior court district, Franklin R. Brown serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (13) In the eighth-A superior court district, James D. Llewellyn serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (14) In the eighth-B superior court district, Paul M. Wright serves a term expiring December 31, 1992.
- (15) In the ninth superior court district, Robert H. Hobgood and Henry W. Hight, Jr., serve terms expiring December 31, 1994.
- (16) In the tenth-A superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
- (17) In the tenth-B superior court district, Robert L. Farmer serves a term expiring December 31, 1992. In the tenth-B superior court district, no election shall be held in 1990 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Henry V. Barnette, Jr., and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1992 and qualifies. The succeeding term begins January 1, 1993.
- (18) In the tenth-C superior court district, Edwin S. Preston, serves a term expiring December 31, 1990. In the tenth-D superior court district, Donald Stephens serves a term expiring December 31, 1988.
- (19) In the eleventh superior court district, Wiley F. Bowen serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (20) In the twelfth-A superior court district, D.B. Herring, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (21) In the twelfth-B superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
- (22) In the twelfth-C superior court district, no election shall be held in 1992 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Coy E. Brewer, Jr., and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The

- succeeding term begins January 1, 1995. In the twelfth-C superior court district, E. Lynn Johnson serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (23) In the thirteenth superior court district, Giles R. Clark serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (24) In the fourteenth-A superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
 - (25) In the fourteenth-B superior court district, no election shall be held in 1992 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Anthony M. Brannon, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The succeeding term begins July 1, 1995.
 - (26) In the fourteenth-B superior court district, no election shall be held in 1990 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Thomas H. Lee, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The succeeding term begins January 1, 1995. In the fourteenth-B superior court district, J. Milton Read, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (27) In the fifteenth-A superior court district, J.B. Allen, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (28) In the fifteenth-B superior court district, F. Gordon Battle serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (29) In the sixteenth-A superior court district, B. Craig Ellis serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (30) In the sixteenth-B superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989. In the sixteenth-B judicial [superior court] district, a judge shall be appointed by the Governor to serve until the results of the 1990 general election are certified. A person shall be elected in the 1990 general election to serve the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 1996.
 - (31) In the seventeenth-A superior court district, Melzer A. Morgan, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (32) In the seventeenth-B superior court district, James M. Long serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (33) In the eighteenth-A superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
 - (34) In the eighteenth-B superior court district, Edward K. Washington's term expired December 31, 1986, but he is holding over because of a court order enjoining an election from being held in 1986. A successor shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
 - (35) In the eighteenth-C superior court district, W. Douglas Albright serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (36) In the eighteenth-D superior court district, Thomas W. Ross's term expired December 31, 1986, but he is holding over because of a court order enjoining an election from being held in 1986. A successor shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
 - (37) In the eighteenth-E superior court district, Joseph John's term expired December 31, 1986, but he is holding over because of a court order enjoining an

- election from being held in 1986. A successor shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
- (38) In the nineteenth-A superior court district, James C. Davis serves a term expiring December 31, 1992.
 - (39) In the nineteenth-B1 superior court district, Russell G. Walker, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990. No election shall be held in 1998 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Russell G. Walker, Jr., and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 2000 and qualifies. The succeeding term shall begin January 1, 2001. The superior court judgeship held on June 12, 1996, in Superior Court District 20A by a resident of Moore County (James M. Webb) is allocated to Superior Court District 19B2. The term of that judge expires December 31, 2000. The judge's successor shall be elected in the 2000 general election.
 - (40) In the nineteenth-C superior court district, Thomas W. Seay, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (41) In the twentieth-A superior court district, F. Fetzer Mills serves a term expiring December 31, 1992.
 - (42) In the twentieth-B superior court district, William H. Helms serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (43) In the twenty-first-A superior court district, William Z. Wood serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (44) In the twenty-first-B superior court district, Judson D. DeRamus, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1988.
 - (45) In the twenty-first-C superior court district, William H. Freeman serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (46) In the twenty-first-D superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.
 - (47) In the twenty-second superior court district, no election shall be held in 1992 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Preston Cornelius, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The succeeding term shall begin January 1, 1995. In the twenty-second superior court district, Robert A. Collier serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (48) In the twenty-third superior court district, Julius A. Rousseau, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (49) In the twenty-fourth superior court district, Charles C. Lamm, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (50) In the twenty-fifth-A superior court district, Claude S. Sitton serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
 - (51) In the twenty-fifth-B superior court district, Forrest A. Ferrell serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
 - (52) In the twenty-sixth-A superior court district, no election shall be held in 1994 for the full term of the seat now occupied by W. Terry Sherrill, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1996 and qualifies. The succeeding term shall begin January 1, 1997. In the twenty-sixth-A superior court district, a judge shall be elected in 1988 to serve an eight-year term beginning January 1, 1989.

- (53) In the twenty-sixth-B superior court district, Frank W. Snepp, Jr., and Kenneth A. Griffin serve terms expiring December 31, 1990.
- (54) In the twenty-sixth-C superior court district, no election shall be held in 1992 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Chase Boone Saunders, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1994 and qualifies. The succeeding term shall begin January 1, 1995. In the twenty-sixth-C superior court district, Robert M. Burroughs serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (55) In the twenty-seventh-A superior court district, no election shall be held in 1988 for the full term of the seat now occupied by Robert E. Gaines, and the holder of that seat shall serve until a successor is elected in 1990 and qualifies. The succeeding term begins January 1, 1991. In the twenty-seventh-A superior court district, Robert W. Kirby serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (56) In the twenty-seventh-B superior court district, John M. Gardner serves a term expiring December 31, 1994.
- (57) In the twenty-eighth superior court district, Robert D. Lewis and C. Walter Allen serve terms expiring December 31, 1990.
- (58) In the twenty-ninth superior court district, Hollis M. Owens, Jr., serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (59) In the thirtieth-A superior court district, James U. Downs serves a term expiring December 31, 1990.
- (60) In the thirtieth-B superior court district, Janet M. Hyatt serves a term expiring December 31, 1994. (1969, c. 1171, ss. 1-3; c. 1190, s. 4; 1971, c. 377, s. 5; c. 997; 1973, c. 47, s. 2; c. 646; c. 855, s. 1; 1975, c. 529; c. 956, ss. 1, 2; 1975, 2nd Sess., c. 983, s. 114; 1977, c. 1119, ss. 1, 3, 4; c. 1130, ss. 1, 2; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1238, s. 1; c. 1243, s. 4; 1979, c. 838, s. 119; c. 1072, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1221, s. 1; 1981, c. 964, ss. 1, 2; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1282, s. 71.2; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1109, ss. 4, 4.1; 1985, c. 698, s. 11(a); 1987, c. 509, s. 1; c. 549, s. 6.6; c. 738, s. 124; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 1; c. 1056, ss. 14, 15; 1989, c. 795, s. 22(a); 1991, c. 746, s. 1; 1993, c. 321, ss. 200.4(a), 200.5(a), (d); 1995, c. 51, s. 1; c. 509, s. 3; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 589, s. 1(a), (c); 1998-212, s. 16.16A(a); 1998-217, s. 67.3(c); 1999-237, ss. 17.12(b), 17.19(a)-(d), 17.20(a)-(c); 1999-396, s. 1; 2000-67, s. 15.6(a); 2000-140, s. 36; 2001-333, ss. 1, 2; 2001-424, s. 22.4(b); 2001-507, ss. 3, 4; 2003-284, ss. 13.14(a), 13.14(b); 2004-124, s. 14.6(b); 2004-127, s. 2(a); 2005-276, ss. 14.2(a), 14.2(e1); 2006-96, s. 2; 2007-323, s. 14.25(a); 2011-203, ss. 1-3; 2011-417, s. 1; 2012-182, s. 2(a), (b); 2013-360, s. 18B.22(a); 2017-57, s. 18B.9(a); 2018-5, s. 18B.5(a); 2018-14, s. 1(a); 2018-121, ss. 1(a), 10; 2021-180, s. 16.7A(a); 2021-189, s. 5.6(a); 2023-134, s. 16.7(a); 2023-134, ss. 16.7(a), 16.26(a).)

§ 7A-41.1. District and set of districts defined; senior resident superior court judges and their authority.

- (a) In this section and in any other law which refers to this section:
 - (1) "District" means any superior court district established by G.S. 7A-41 which consists exclusively of one or more entire counties;

- (2) "Set of districts" means any set of two or more superior court districts established under G.S. 7A-41, none of which consists exclusively of one or more entire counties, but both or all of which include territory from the same county or counties and together comprise all of the territory of that county or those counties;
- (3) "Regular resident superior court judge of the district or set of districts" means a regular superior court judge who is a resident judge of any of the superior court districts established under G.S. 7A-41 which comprise or are included in a district or set of districts as defined herein.

(b) There shall be one and only one senior resident superior court judge for each district or set of districts as defined in subsection (a) of this section, who shall be:

- (1) Where there is only one regular resident superior court judge for the district, that judge; and
- (2) Where there are two or more regular resident superior court judges for the district or set of districts, the judge who, from among all the regular resident superior court judges of the district or set of districts, has the most continuous service as a regular resident superior court judge; provided if two or more judges are of equal seniority, the oldest of those judges shall be the senior regular resident superior court judge.
- (3) Where there is a set of districts, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall designate one of the judges as senior resident superior court judge to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the Chief Justice, if that set of districts are wholly contained in one county that is specified in law as the sole proper venue for certain actions.

(c) Senior resident superior court judges and regular resident superior court judges possess equal judicial jurisdiction, power, authority and status, but all duties placed by the Constitution or statutes on the resident judge of a superior court district, including the appointment to and removal from office, which are not related to a case, controversy or judicial proceeding and which do not involve the exercise of judicial power, shall be discharged, throughout a district as defined in subsection (a) of this section or throughout all of the districts comprising a set of districts so defined, for each county in that district or set of districts, by the senior resident superior court judge for that district or set of districts. That senior resident superior court judge alone among the superior court judges of that district or set of districts shall receive the salary and benefits of a senior resident superior court judge.

(d) A senior resident superior court judge for a district or set of districts as defined in subsection (a) of this section with two or more regular resident superior court judges, by notice in writing to the Administrative Officer of the Courts, may decline to exercise the authority vested in him by this section, in which event such authority shall be exercised by the regular resident superior court judge who, among the other regular resident superior court judges of the district or set of districts, is next senior in point of service or age, respectively.

(e) In the event a senior resident superior court judge for a district or set of districts with one or more regular resident superior court judges is unable, due to mental or physical incapacity, to exercise the authority vested in him by the statute, and the Chief Justice, in his discretion, has determined that such incapacity exists, the Chief Justice shall appoint an acting senior regular resident superior court judge from the other regular resident judges of the district or set of districts, to exercise, temporarily, the authority of the senior regular resident judge. Such appointee shall

serve at the pleasure of the Chief Justice and until his temporary appointment is vacated by appropriate order. (1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 2; 2010-105, s. 1; 2012-194, s. 63.5.)

§ 7A-41.2. Nomination and election of regular superior court judges.

Candidates for the office of regular superior court judge shall be both nominated and elected by the qualified voters of the superior court district for which the election is sought. (1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 9, s. 1.)

§ 7A-42. Sessions of superior court in cities other than county seats.

(a) Sessions of the superior court shall be held in each city in the State which is not a county seat and which has a population of 35,000 or more, according to the 1960 federal census.

(a1) In addition to the sessions of superior court authorized by subsection (a) of this section, sessions of superior court in the following counties may be held in the additional seats of court listed by order of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge after consultation with the Chief District Court Judge:

County	Additional Seats of Court
Davidson	Thomasville
Iredell	Mooreville

The courtrooms and related judicial facilities for these sessions of superior court may be provided by the municipality, and in such cases the facilities fee collected for the State by the clerk of superior court shall be remitted to the municipality to assist in meeting the expense of providing those facilities.

(b) For the purpose of segregating the cases to be tried in any city referred to in subsection (a), and to designate the place of trial, the clerk of superior court in any county having one or more such cities shall set up a criminal docket and a civil docket, which dockets shall indicate the cases and proceedings to be tried in each such city in his county. Such dockets shall bear the name of the city in which such sessions of court are to be held, followed by the word "Division." Summons in actions to be tried in any such city shall clearly designate the place of trial.

(c) For the purpose of determining the proper place of trial of any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, the county in which any city described in subsection (a) is located shall be divided into divisions, and the territory embraced in the division in which each such city is located shall consist of the township in which such city lies and all contiguous townships within such county, such division of the superior court to be known by the name of such city followed by the word "Division." All other townships of any such county shall constitute a division of the superior court to be known by the name of the county seat followed by the word "Division." All laws, rules, and regulations now or hereafter in force and effect in determining the proper venue as between the superior courts of the several counties of the State shall apply for the purpose of determining the proper place of trial as between such divisions within such county and as between each of such divisions and any other county of the superior court in North Carolina.

(d) The clerk of superior court of any county with an additional seat of superior court may, but shall not be required to, hear matters in any place other than at his office at the county seat.

(e) The grand jury for the several divisions of court of any county in which a city described in subsection (a) is located shall be drawn from the whole county, and may hold hearings and meetings at either the county seat or elsewhere within the county as it may elect, or as it may be directed by the judge holding any session of superior court within such county; provided, however,

that in arranging the sessions of the court for the trial of criminal cases for any county in which any such city is located a session of one week or more shall be held at the county seat preceding any session of one week or more to be held in any such city, so as to facilitate the work of the grand jury, and so as to confine its meetings to the county seat as fully as may be practicable. All petit jurors for all sessions of court in the several divisions of such county shall be drawn, as now or hereafter provided by law, from the whole of the county in which any such city is located for all sessions of courts in the several divisions of such county.

(f) Special sessions of court for the trial of either civil or criminal cases in any city described in subsection (a) may be arranged as by law now or hereafter provided for special sessions of the superior court.

(g) All court records of all such divisions of the superior court of any such county shall be kept in the office of the clerk of the superior court at the county seat, but they may be temporarily removed under the direction and supervision of the clerk to any such division or divisions. No judgment or order rendered at any session held in any such city shall become a lien upon or otherwise affect the title to any real estate within such county until it has been docketed in the office of the clerk of the superior court at the county seat as now or may hereafter be provided by law; provided, that nothing herein shall affect the provisions of G.S. 1-233 and the equities therein provided for shall be preserved as to all judgments and orders rendered at any session of the superior court in any such city.

(h) It shall be the duty of the board of county commissioners of the county in which any such city is located to provide a suitable place for holding such sessions of court, and to provide for the payment of the extra expense, if any, of the sheriff and his deputies in attending the sessions of court of any such division, and the expense of keeping, housing and feeding prisoners while awaiting trial.

(i) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when exigent circumstances exist, sessions of superior court may be conducted at a location outside a county seat by order of the Senior Resident Superior Court Judge of a county, with the prior approval of the location and the facilities by the Administrative Office of the Courts and after consultation with the Clerk of Superior Court and county officials of the county. An order entered under this subsection shall be filed in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court in the county and posted at the courthouse within the county seat and notice shall be posted in other conspicuous locations. The order shall be limited to such session or sessions as are approved by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. (1943, c. 121; 1969, c. 1190, s. 48; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 2.1; 1997-304, s. 4.)

§ 7A-43. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§§ 7A-43.1 through 7A-43.3. Repealed by Session Laws 1967, c. 1049, s. 6.

§ 7A-44. Salary and expenses of superior court judge.

(a) A judge of the superior court, regular or special, shall receive the annual salary set forth in the Current Operations Appropriations Act, and in addition shall be paid the same travel allowance as State employees generally by G.S. 138-6(a), provided that no travel allowance be paid for travel within his county of residence. The Administrative Officer of the Courts may also reimburse superior court judges, in addition to the above funds for travel, for travel and subsistence expenses incurred for professional education.

(b) In lieu of merit and other increment raises paid to regular State employees, a judge of the superior court, regular or special, shall receive as longevity pay an annual amount equal to four and eight-tenths percent (4.8%) of the annual salary set forth in the Current Operations Appropriations Act payable monthly after five years of service, nine and six-tenths percent (9.6%) after 10 years of service, fourteen and four-tenths percent (14.4%) after 15 years of service, nineteen and two-tenths percent (19.2%) after 20 years of service, and twenty-four percent (24%) after 25 years of service. "Service" means service as a justice or judge of the General Court of Justice, as a member of the Utilities Commission, as an administrative law judge, or as director or assistant director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. Service shall also mean service as a district attorney or as a clerk of superior court. (Code, ss. 918, 3734; 1891, c. 193; 1901, c. 167; 1905, c. 208; Rev., s. 2765; 1907, c. 988; 1909, c. 85; 1911, c. 82; 1919, c. 51; C.S., s. 3884; 1921, c. 25, s. 3; 1925, c. 227; 1927, c. 69, s. 2; 1949, c. 157, s. 1; 1953, c. 1080, s. 1; 1957, c. 1416; 1961, c. 957, s. 2; 1963, c. 839, s. 2; 1965, c. 921, s. 2; 1967, c. 691, s. 40; 1969, c. 1190, s. 36; 1973, c. 1474; 1975, 2nd Sess., c. 983, s. 13; 1977, c. 802, s. 41.1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1137, s. 28; 1981, c. 964, s. 18; 1983, c. 761, s. 244; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 165; c. 1109, ss. 2.2, 11, 13.1; 1985, c. 698, s. 10(a); 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1086, s. 30(b); c. 1100, s. 15(c); 2007-323, s. 28.18A(c); 2009-451, s. 15.10; 2009-575, s. 13; 2017-57, s. 35.4(f).)

§ 7A-44.1. Secretarial and clerical help.

(a) Each senior resident superior court judge may appoint a judicial secretary to serve at his pleasure and under his direction the secretarial and clerical needs of the superior court judges of the district or set of districts as defined by G.S. 7A-41.1(a) for which he is the senior resident superior court judge. The appointment may be full-or part-time and the compensation and allowances of such secretary shall be fixed by the senior regular resident superior court judge, within limits determined by the Administrative Office of the Courts, and paid by the State.

(b) Each senior resident superior court judge may apply to the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts to enter into contracts with local governments for the provision by the State of services of judicial secretaries pursuant to G.S. 153A-212.1 or G.S. 160A-289.1.

(c) The Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts may provide assistance requested pursuant to subsection (b) of this section only upon a showing by the senior resident superior court judge, supported by facts, that the overwhelming public interest warrants the use of additional resources for the speedy disposition of cases involving drug offenses, domestic violence, or other offenses involving a threat to public safety.

(d) The terms of any contract entered into with local governments pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall be fixed by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts in each case. Nothing in this section shall be construed to obligate the General Assembly to make any appropriation to implement the provisions of this section or to obligate the Administrative Office of the Courts to provide the administrative costs of establishing or maintaining the positions or services provided for under this section. Further, nothing in this section shall be construed to obligate the Administrative Office of the Courts to maintain positions or services initially provided for under this section. (1975, c. 956, s. 3; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 3; 2000-67, s. 15.4(a).)

§ 7A-45: Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 509, s. 7, effective January 1, 1989.

§ 7A-45.1. Special judges.

(a) Effective November 1, 1993, the Governor may appoint two special superior court judges to serve terms expiring September 30, 2000. Effective October 1, 2000, one of those positions is abolished. Successors to the special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to a five-year term. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a1) Effective October 1, 1995, the Governor may appoint two special superior court judges to serve terms expiring September 30, 2000. Successors to the special superior court judges appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a2) Effective December 15, 1996, the Governor may appoint four special superior court judges to serve terms expiring five years from the date that each judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judges appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a3) Effective December 15, 1998, the Governor may appoint a special superior court judge to serve a term expiring five years from the date that judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a4) Effective October 1, 1999, the Governor may appoint four special superior court judges to serve terms expiring five years from the date that each judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judges appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a5) Effective October 1, 2001, the Governor may appoint a special superior court judge to serve a term expiring five years from the date that judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a6) Effective December 1, 2004, the Governor may appoint a special superior court judge to serve a term expiring five years from the date that each judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a7) Effective January 1, 2008, the Governor may appoint two special superior court judges to serve terms expiring five years from the date that each judge takes office. Successors to the special superior court judges appointed pursuant to this subsection shall be appointed to five-year terms. A special judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and

disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(a8) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the four special superior court judgeships held as of April 1, 2014, by judges whose terms expire on April 29, 2015, October 20, 2015, and December 31, 2017, and the two special superior court judgeships held as of April 1, 2015, by judges whose terms expire January 26, 2016, are abolished when any of the following first occurs:

- (1) Retirement of the incumbent judge.
- (2) Resignation of the incumbent judge.
- (3) Removal from office of the incumbent judge.
- (4) Death of the incumbent judge.
- (5) Expiration of the term of the incumbent judge.

(a9) Effective upon the retirement, resignation, removal from office, death, or expiration of the term of the special superior court judge held as of April 1, 2014, by the judge whose term expires on April 29, 2015, a new special superior court judgeship shall be created and filled through the procedure for nomination and confirmation provided for in subsection (a10) of this section.

Prior to submitting a nominee for the judgeship created under this subsection to the General Assembly for confirmation, the Governor shall consult with the Chief Justice to ensure that the person nominated to fill this judgeship has the requisite expertise and experience to be designated by the Chief Justice as a business court judge under G.S. 7A-45.3, and the Chief Justice is requested to designate this judge as a business court judge.

(a10) Except for the judgeships abolished pursuant to subsection (a8) of this section, and except as provided in subsection (a12) of this section, upon the retirement, resignation, removal from office, death, or expiration of the term of any special superior court judge on or after September 1, 2014, each judgeship shall be filled for a full eight-year term beginning upon the judge's taking office according to the following procedure prescribed by the General Assembly pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(1) of the North Carolina Constitution. As each judgeship becomes vacant or the term expires, the Governor shall submit the name of a nominee for that judgeship to the General Assembly for confirmation by ratified joint resolution. Upon each such confirmation, the Governor shall appoint the confirmed nominee to that judgeship.

However, upon the failure of the Governor to submit the name of a nominee within 90 days of the occurrence of the vacancy or within 90 days of the expiration of the judge's term, as applicable, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives jointly shall submit the name of a nominee to the General Assembly. The appointment shall then be made by enactment of a bill. The bill shall state the name of the person being appointed, the office to which the appointment is being made, and the county of residence of the appointee.

The Governor may withdraw any nomination prior to it failing on any reading, and in case of such withdrawal the Governor shall submit a different nomination within 45 days of withdrawal. If a nomination shall fail any reading, the Governor shall submit a different nomination within 45 days of such failure. In either case of failure to submit a new nomination within 45 days, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall submit the name of a nominee to the General Assembly under the procedure provided in the preceding paragraph.

No person shall occupy a special superior court judgeship authorized under this subsection in any capacity, or have any right to, claim upon, or powers of those judgeships, unless that person's

nomination has been confirmed by the General Assembly by joint resolution or appointed through the enactment of a bill upon the failure of the Governor to submit a nominee. Until confirmed by the General Assembly and appointed by the Governor, or appointed by the General Assembly upon the failure of the Governor to appoint a nominee, and qualified by taking the oath of office, a nominee is neither a de jure nor a de facto officer.

(a11) The Chief Justice is requested, pursuant to the authority under G.S. 7A-45.3 to designate business court judges, to maintain at least six business court judgeships from among the special superior court judgeships authorized under this section.

(a12) In addition to any other special superior court judges authorized by law, effective January 1, 2024, the General Assembly may appoint by enactment of a bill 10 special superior court judges to serve terms expiring at the earlier of (i) eight years from the date that each judge takes office or (ii) the date of the judge's death, retirement, resignation, or removal from office. A bill appointing a special superior court judge under this subsection shall state the name of the person being appointed, the office to which the appointment is being made, and the judicial division of residence of the appointee. Five of these judges shall be nominated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one residing in each of the five judicial divisions listed under G.S. 7A-41, and five shall be nominated by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one residing in each of the five judicial divisions listed under G.S. 7A-41.

Upon the natural expiration of the term of a special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this subsection, or upon the expiration of a term due to a judge's death, retirement, resignation, or removal from office, a successor shall be appointed to a new term in the same manner and for the same length as other judges appointed pursuant to this subsection. The legislative officer who nominated the special superior court judge whose term has ended shall nominate the new special superior court judge.

A special superior court judge takes the same oath of office and is subject to the same requirements and disabilities as are or may be prescribed by law for regular judges of the superior court, save the requirement of residence in a particular district.

(b) A special judge is subject to removal from office for the same causes and in the same manner as a regular judge of the superior court, and a vacancy occurring in the office of special judge, except as provided for in subsection (a12) of this section, is filled by the Governor by appointment for the unexpired term.

(c) A special judge, in any court in which he is duly appointed to hold, has the same power and authority in all matters that a regular judge holding the same court would have. A special judge, duly assigned to hold the court of a particular county, has during the session of court in that county, in open court and in chambers, the same power and authority of a regular judge in all matters arising in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) in which that county is located, that could properly be heard or determined by a regular judge holding the same session of court.

(d) A special judge is authorized to settle cases on appeal and to make all proper orders in regard thereto after the time for which he was commissioned has expired. (1987, c. 738, s. 123(a); 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 5; 1993, c. 321, s. 200.5(g); 1995, c. 507, s. 21.1(f); 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 22.6(a); 1998-212, s. 16.22(a), (b); 1999-237, s. 17.12(a); 2000-67, s. 15.8(a); 2001-424, s. 22.4(a); 2004-124, s. 14.6(a); 2007-323, s. 14.24; 2014-100, s. 18B.6; 2015-241, s. 18A.19; 2021-180, s. 16.7B(a); 2023-134, s. 16.19(a).)

§ 7A-45.2. Emergency special judges of the superior court; qualifications, appointment, removal, and authority.

(a) Any justice or judge of the appellate division of the General Court of Justice that meets each of the following requirements may apply to the Governor for appointment as an emergency special superior court judge in the same manner as is provided for application as an emergency superior court judge in G.S. 7A-53:

- (1) Retires under the provisions of the Consolidated Judicial Retirement Act, Article 4 of Chapter 135 of the General Statutes, or who is eligible to receive a retirement allowance under that act.
- (2) Has not reached the mandatory retirement age specified in G.S. 7A-5(b).
- (3) Has served at least five years as a superior court judge or five years as a justice or judge of the appellate division of the General Court of Justice, or any combination thereof, whether or not eligible to serve as an emergency justice or judge of the appellate division of the General Court of Justice.
- (4) Whose judicial service ended within the preceding 10 years.

If the Governor is satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements of this section and is physically and mentally able to perform the duties of a superior court judge, the Governor shall issue a commission appointing the applicant as an emergency special superior court judge until the applicant reaches the mandatory retirement age for superior court judges specified in G.S. 7A-40.1.

(b) Any emergency special superior court judge appointed as provided in this section shall:

- (1) Have the same powers and duties, when duly assigned to hold court, as provided for an emergency superior court judge by G.S. 7A-48.
- (2) Be subject to assignment in the same manner as provided for an emergency superior court judge by G.S. 7A-46 and G.S. 7A-52(a).
- (3) Receive the same compensation, expenses, and allowances, when assigned to hold court, as an emergency superior court judge as provided by G.S. 7A-52(b).
- (4) Be subject to the provisions and requirements of the Canons of Judicial Conduct.
- (5) Not engage in the practice of law during any period for which the emergency special superior court judgeship is commissioned. However, this subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit an emergency special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this section from serving as a referee, arbitrator, or mediator, during service as an emergency special superior court judge when the service does not conflict with or interfere with the emergency special superior court judge's judicial service in emergency status.

(c) Upon reaching mandatory retirement age for superior court judges as set forth in G.S. 7A-40.1, any emergency special superior court judge appointed pursuant to this section, whose commission has expired, may be recalled as a recalled emergency special superior court judge to preside over any regular or special session of the superior court if each of the following requirements is satisfied:

- (1) The judge shall consent to the recall.
- (2) The Chief Justice may order the recall.
- (3) Prior to ordering recall, the Chief Justice shall be satisfied that the recalled judge is capable of efficiently and promptly discharging the duties of the office to which recalled.

- (4) Jurisdiction of a recalled emergency special superior court judge is as set forth in G.S. 7A-48.
- (5) Orders of recall and assignment shall be in writing and entered upon the minutes of the court to which the judge is assigned.
- (6) Compensation, expenses, and allowances of recalled emergency special superior court judges are the same as for recalled emergency superior court judges under G.S. 7A-52(b).
- (7) The emergency special superior court judge is listed as active on the list described in G.S. 7A-52(a).

(d) Any former justice or judge of the appellate division of the General Court of Justice who otherwise meets the requirements of subsection (a) of this section to be appointed an emergency special superior court judge but has already reached the mandatory retirement age for superior court judges set forth in G.S. 7A-40.1 on retirement may, in lieu of serving as an emergency judge of the court from which he retired, apply to the Governor to be appointed as an emergency special superior court judge as provided in this section. If the Governor issues a commission to the applicant, the retired justice or judge is subject to recall as an emergency special superior court judge as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

(e) No justice or judge appointed as an emergency special superior court judge or subject to recall as provided in this section shall, during the period so appointed or subject to recall, contemporaneously serve as an emergency justice or judge of the appellate division of the General Court of Justice. (1993, c. 321, s. 199; 2017-57, s. 18B.11(a); 2023-134, s. 16.14(g).)

§ 7A-45.3. Superior court judges designated for complex business cases.

The Chief Justice may exercise the authority under rules of practice prescribed pursuant to G.S. 7A-34 to designate one or more of the special superior court judges authorized by G.S. 7A-45.1 to hear and decide complex business cases as prescribed by the rules of practice. Any judge so designated shall be known as a Business Court Judge and shall preside in the Business Court. If there is more than one business court judge, including any judge serving as a senior business court judge pursuant to G.S. 7A-52(a1) or upon recall pursuant to G.S. 7A-57, the Chief Justice may designate one of them as the Chief Business Court Judge. If there is no designation by the Chief Justice, the judge with the longest term of service on the court shall serve as Chief Business Court Judge until the Chief Justice makes an appointment to the position. The presiding Business Court Judge shall issue a written opinion in connection with any order granting or denying a motion under G.S. 1A-1, Rule 12, 56, 59, or 60, or any order finally disposing of a complex business case, other than an order effecting a settlement agreement or jury verdict. (2005-425, s. 1.1; 2014-102, s. 2; 2016-91, s. 1.)

§ 7A-45.4. Designation of complex business cases.

(a) Any party may designate as a mandatory complex business case an action that involves a material issue related to any of the following:

- (1) Disputes involving the law governing corporations, except charitable and religious organizations qualified under G.S. 55A-1-40(4) on the grounds of religious purpose, partnerships, and limited liability companies, including disputes arising under Chapters 55, 55A, 55B, 57D, and 59 of the General Statutes.

- (2) Disputes involving securities, including disputes arising under Chapter 78A of the General Statutes.
- (3) Disputes involving antitrust law, including disputes arising under Chapter 75 of the General Statutes that do not arise solely under G.S. 75-1.1 or Article 2 of Chapter 75 of the General Statutes.
- (4) Disputes involving trademark law, including disputes arising under Chapter 80 of the General Statutes.
- (5) Disputes involving the ownership, use, licensing, lease, installation, or performance of intellectual property, including computer software, software applications, information technology and systems, data and data security, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology products, and bioscience technologies.
- (6), (7) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-102, s. 3, effective October 1, 2014.
- (8) Disputes involving trade secrets, including disputes arising under Article 24 of Chapter 66 of the General Statutes.
- (9) Contract disputes in which all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. At least one plaintiff and at least one defendant is a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company, including any entity authorized to transact business in North Carolina under Chapter 55, 55A, 55B, 57D, or 59 of the General Statutes.
 - b. The complaint asserts a claim for breach of contract or seeks a declaration of rights, status, or other legal relations under a contract.
 - c. The amount in controversy computed in accordance with G.S. 7A-243 is at least one million dollars (\$1,000,000).
 - d. All parties consent to the designation.
- (b) The following actions shall be designated as mandatory complex business cases:
 - (1) An action involving a material issue related to tax law that has been the subject of a contested tax case for which judicial review is requested under G.S. 105-241.16, or a civil action under G.S. 105-241.17 containing a constitutional challenge to a tax statute, shall be designated as a mandatory complex business case by the petitioner or plaintiff.
 - (2) An action described in subdivision (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), or (8) of subsection (a) of this section in which the amount in controversy computed in accordance with G.S. 7A-243 is at least five million dollars (\$5,000,000) shall be designated as a mandatory complex business case by the party whose pleading caused the amount in controversy to equal or exceed five million dollars (\$5,000,000).
 - (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-119, s. 6, effective June 29, 2015, and applicable to any action filed on or after that date.
 - (4) An action in which a general receiver is sought to be appointed pursuant to G.S. 1-507.24 for a debtor that is not an individual business debtor as defined in G.S. 1-507.20 and has assets having a fair market value of not less than five million dollars (\$5,000,000), if the party making the designation is either (i) the debtor or (ii) one or more creditors or creditors' duly authorized representatives that assert a claim or claims against the debtor exceeding, in the aggregate, twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) that in each case is not contingent as to liability and is not the subject of a bona fide dispute as to liability or amount. Any creditor or creditor's duly authorized representative that is not a party to the

action may join in the notice of designation with the same effect as if such joining creditor or creditor's representative were a party.

(c) **(Effective until contingency met – see note)** A party designating an action as a mandatory complex business case shall file a Notice of Designation in the Superior Court in which the action has been filed, shall contemporaneously serve the notice on each opposing party or counsel and on the Special Superior Court Judge for Complex Business Cases who is then the Chief Business Court Judge, and shall contemporaneously send a copy of the notice by e-mail to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for approval of the designation of the action as a mandatory complex business case. The Notice of Designation shall, in good faith and based on information reasonably available, succinctly state the basis of the designation and include a certificate by or on behalf of the designating party that the civil action meets the criteria for designation as a mandatory complex business case pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section.

(c) **(Effective once contingency met – see note)** A party designating an action as a mandatory complex business case shall file a Notice of Designation in the action pursuant to G.S. 1-81.2. The Notice of Designation shall, in good faith and based on information reasonably available, succinctly state the basis of the designation and include a certificate by or on behalf of the designating party that the civil action meets the criteria for designation as a mandatory complex business case pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section. The Notice of Designation shall identify the county of origin, which is the county in which the matter is pending at the time the Notice of Designation is filed or, if filed contemporaneously with the initiation of the case, the county in which the plaintiff asserts the trial of the matter would be proper under Article 7 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes.

(d) The Notice of Designation shall be filed:

- (1) By the plaintiff, the third-party plaintiff, or the petitioner for judicial review contemporaneously with the filing of the complaint, third-party complaint, or the petition for judicial review in the action.
- (2) By any intervenor when the intervenor files a motion for permission to intervene in the action.
- (3) By any defendant or any other party within 30 days of receipt of service of the pleading seeking relief from the defendant or party.
- (4) By any party whose pleading caused the amount in controversy computed in accordance with G.S. 7A-243 to equal or exceed five million dollars (\$5,000,000) contemporaneously with the filing of that pleading.
- (5) In the case of an action described in subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of this section, by the debtor, any person with a lien on receivership property, or any creditor of the debtor.

(e) **(Effective until contingency met – see note)** Within 30 days after service of the Notice of Designation, any other party may, in good faith, file and serve an opposition to the designation of the action as a mandatory complex business case. The opposition to the designation of the action shall assert all grounds on which the party opposing designation objects to the designation, and any grounds not asserted shall be deemed conclusively waived. Within 30 days after the entry of an order staying a pending action pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, any party opposing the stay shall file an objection with the Business Court asserting all grounds on which the party objects to the case proceeding in the Business Court, and any grounds not asserted shall be deemed conclusively waived. Based on the opposition or on its own motion, the Business Court Judge shall rule by written order on the opposition or objection and determine whether the action should be

designated as a mandatory complex business case. If a party disagrees with the decision, the party may appeal in accordance with G.S. 7A-27(a).

(e) **(Effective once contingency met – see note)** Within 30 days after service of the Notice of Designation, any other party may, in good faith, file and serve an opposition to the designation of the action as a mandatory complex business case. The opposition to the designation of the action shall assert all grounds on which the party opposing designation objects to the designation, and any grounds not asserted shall be deemed conclusively waived. Within 30 days after the entry of an order staying a pending action pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, any party opposing the stay shall file an objection with the Business Court asserting all grounds on which the party objects to the case proceeding in the Business Court, and any grounds not asserted shall be deemed conclusively waived. Based on the opposition or on its own motion, the Chief Business Court Judge shall rule by written order on the opposition or objection and determine whether the action should be designated as a mandatory complex business case. If a party disagrees with the decision, the party may appeal in accordance with G.S. 7A-27(a).

(f) **(Effective until contingency met – see note)** Once a designation is filed under subsection (d) of this section, and after preliminary approval by the Chief Justice, a case shall be designated and administered a complex business case. All proceedings in the action shall be before the Business Court Judge to whom it has been assigned unless and until an order has been entered under subsection (e) of this section ordering that the case not be designated a mandatory complex business case or the Chief Justice revokes approval. If complex business case status is revoked or denied, the action shall be treated as any other civil action, unless it is designated as an exceptional civil case or a discretionary complex business case pursuant to Rule 2.1 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts.

(f) **(Effective once contingency met – see note)** Once a designation is filed under subsection (d) of this section, a case shall be designated and administered a complex business case unless and until an order has been entered under subsection (e) of this section ordering that the case not be designated a mandatory complex business case. Except for execution proceedings pursuant to Articles 28 through 32 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes, all proceedings in the action shall be before the Business Court Judge to whom it has been assigned. If complex business case status is revoked or denied, the action shall be treated as any other civil action, unless it is designated as an exceptional civil case or a discretionary complex business case pursuant to the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts.

(g) If an action required to be designated as a mandatory complex business case pursuant to subsection (b) of this section is not so designated, the Superior Court in which the action has been filed shall, by order entered sua sponte, stay the action until it has been designated as a mandatory complex business case by the party required to do so in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(h) Nothing in this section is intended to permit actions for personal injury grounded in tort to be designated as mandatory complex business cases or to confer, enlarge, or diminish the subject matter jurisdiction of any court. (2005-425, s. 2; 2007-491, s. 4; 2014-102, s. 3; 2015-119, s. 6; 2016-91, s. 2; 2020-75, s. 3(a); 2024-33, s. 3(b).)

§ 7A-45.5: Repealed by Session Laws 2017-57, s. 18B.4(a), effective June 28, 2017.

§ 7A-46. Special sessions.

Whenever it appears to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that there is need for a special session of superior court in any county, he may order a special session in that county, and order any regular, special, or emergency judge to hold such session. The Chief Justice shall notify the clerk of the superior court of the county, who shall initiate action under Chapter 9 of the General Statutes to provide a jury for the special session, if a jury is required.

Special sessions have all the jurisdiction and powers that regular sessions have. (R.C., c. 31, s. 22; 1868-9, c. 273; 1876-7, c. 44; Code, ss. 914, 915, 916; Rev., ss. 1512, 1513, 1516; C.S., ss. 1450, 1452, 1455; Ex. Sess. 1924, c. 100; 1951, c. 491, ss. 1, 3; 1959, c. 360; 1969, c. 1190, s. 46.)

§ 7A-47. Powers of regular judges holding courts by assignment or exchange.

A regular superior court judge, duly assigned to hold the courts of a county, or holding such courts by exchange, shall have the same powers in the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) in which that county is located, in open court and in chambers as the resident judge or any judge regularly assigned to hold the courts of the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) has, and his jurisdiction in chambers shall extend until the session is adjourned or the session expires by operation of law, whichever is later. (1951, c. 740; 1969, c. 1190, s. 42; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 6.)

§ 7A-47.1. Jurisdiction in vacation or in session.

In any case in which the superior court in vacation has jurisdiction, and all the parties unite in the proceedings, they may apply for relief to the superior court in vacation, or during a session of court, at their election. Any regular resident superior court judge of the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) and any special superior court judge residing in the district or set of districts and the judge regularly presiding over the courts of the district or set of districts have concurrent jurisdiction throughout the district or set of districts in all matters and proceedings in which the superior court has jurisdiction out of session; provided, that in all matters and proceedings not requiring a jury or in which a jury is waived, any regular resident superior court judge of the district or set of districts and any special superior court judge residing in the district or set of districts shall have concurrent jurisdiction throughout the district or set of districts with the judge holding the courts of the district or set of districts and any such regular or special superior court judge, in the exercise of such concurrent jurisdiction, may hear and pass upon such matters and proceedings in vacation, out of session or during a session of court. (1871-2, c. 3; Code, c. 10, s. 230; Rev., s. 1501; C.S., s. 1438; 1939, c. 69; 1945, c. 142; 1951, c. 78, s. 2; 1969, c. 1190, s. 47; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 7.)

§ 7A-47.2. Repealed by Session Laws 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037,s. 8.

§ 7A-47.3. Rotation and assignment; sessions.

(a) To effect the intent of Article IV, Section 11 of the North Carolina Constitution, each regular resident superior court judge may, upon each rotation, be assigned to hold the courts either of one of the districts or of one of the sets of districts in that judge's judicial division.

(b) All sessions of superior court shall be for an entire county, whether that county comprises or is located in a district or in a set of districts and at each session all matters and proceedings arising anywhere in the county shall be heard.

(c) In making assignment of the judges of the superior court, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall strive to allow each regular resident superior court judge to be assigned to the

district or set of districts from which that regular resident superior court judge was elected or appointed no less than one-half of the calendar year.

(d) For purposes of this section, "district or set of districts" shall have the same meaning as in G.S. 7A-41.1(a).

(e) The senior resident superior court judge, in consultation with the parties to the case, shall designate a specific resident judge or a specific judge assigned to hold court in the district to preside over all proceedings that occur 150 days after the case was filed in cases subject to G.S. 90-21.11(2). (1987, c. 509, s. 3; 738, s. 124; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 9; 2018-121, s. 5; 2021-47, s. 1(b); 2022-47, s. 8(a).)

§ 7A-48. Jurisdiction of emergency judges.

Emergency superior court judges have the same power and authority in all matters whatsoever, in the courts which they are assigned to hold, that regular judges holding the same courts would have. An emergency judge duly assigned to hold the courts of a county or district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) has the same powers in that county and district or set of districts in open court and in chambers as a resident judge of the district or set of districts or any judge regularly assigned to hold the courts of the district or set of districts would have, but his jurisdiction in chambers extends only until the session is adjourned or the session expires by operation of law, whichever is later. (Ex. Sess. 1921, c. 94, s. 1; C.S., s. 1435(b); 1925, c. 8; 1941, c. 52, s. 2; 1951, c. 88; 1969, c. 1190, s. 39; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 10.)

§ 7A-49. Orders returnable to another judge; notice.

When any special or emergency judge makes any matter returnable before him, and thereafter he is called upon by the Chief Justice to hold court elsewhere, he shall order the matter heard before some other judge, setting forth in the order the time and place where it is to be heard, and he shall send copies of the order to the attorneys representing the parties in such matter. (Ex. Sess. 1921, c. 94, s. 2; C.S., s. 1435(c); 1951, c. 491, s. 1; 1969, c. 1190, s. 40.)

§ 7A-49.1. Disposition of motions when judge disqualified.

Whenever a judge before whom a motion is made, either in open court or in chambers, disqualifies himself from determining it, he may in his discretion refer the motion for disposition to a regular resident superior court judge of, or any judge regularly holding the courts of, the district or set of districts as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a) in which the county in which the cause arose is located, or of any adjoining district or set of districts, who shall have full power and authority to hear and determine the motion in the same manner as if he were the presiding judge of a session of superior court for that county. (1939, c. 48; 1961, c. 50; 1969, c. 1190, s. 43; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1037, s. 11.)

§ 7A-49.2. Civil business at criminal sessions; criminal business at civil sessions.

(a) At criminal sessions of court, motions in civil actions may be heard upon due notice, and trials in civil actions may be heard by consent of parties. Motions for confirmation or rejection of referees' reports may also be heard upon 10 days' notice and judgment may be entered on such reports. The court may also enter consent orders and consent judgments, and try uncontested civil actions.

(b) For sessions of court designated for the trial of civil cases only, no grand juries shall be drawn and no criminal process shall be made returnable to any civil session. (1901, c. 28; Rev., ss.

1507, 1508; 1913, c. 196; Ex. Sess. 1913, c. 23; 1915, cc. 68, 240; 1917, c. 13; C.S., ss. 1444, 1445; 1931, c. 394; 1947, c. 25; 1969, c. 1190, s. 44; 1973, c. 503, s. 1.)

§ 7A-49.3. Repealed by Session Laws 1999-428, s. 2.

§ 7A-49.4. Superior court criminal case docketing.

(a) Criminal Docketing. – Criminal cases in superior court shall be calendared by the district attorney at administrative settings according to a criminal case docketing plan developed by the district attorney for each superior court district in consultation with the superior court judges residing in that district and after opportunity for comment by members of the local bar. Each criminal case docketing plan shall, at a minimum, comply with the provisions of this section, but may contain additional provisions not inconsistent with this section.

(b) Administrative Settings. – An administrative setting shall be calendared for each felony within 60 days of indictment or service of notice of indictment if required by law, or at the next regularly scheduled session of superior court if later than 60 days from indictment or service if required. At an administrative setting:

- (1) The court shall determine the status of the defendant's representation by counsel;
- (2) After hearing from the parties, the court shall set deadlines for the delivery of discovery, arraignment if necessary, and filing of motions;
- (3) If the district attorney has made a determination regarding a plea arrangement, the district attorney shall inform the defendant as to whether a plea arrangement will be offered and the terms of any proposed plea arrangement, and the court may conduct a plea conference if supported by the interest of justice;
- (4) The court may hear pending pretrial motions, set such motions for hearing on a date certain, or defer ruling on motions until the trial of the case; and
- (5) The court may schedule more than one administrative setting if requested by the parties or if it is found to be necessary to promote the fair administration of justice in a timely manner.

Whenever practical, administrative settings shall be held by a superior court judge residing within the district, but may otherwise be held by any superior court judge.

If the parties have not otherwise agreed upon a trial date, then upon the conclusion of the final administrative setting, the district attorney shall announce a proposed trial date. The court shall set that date as the tentative trial date unless, after providing the parties an opportunity to be heard, the court determines that the interests of justice require the setting of a different date. In that event, the district attorney shall set another tentative trial date during the final administrative setting. The trial shall occur no sooner than 30 days after the final administrative setting, except by agreement of the State and the defendant.

Nothing in this section precludes the disposition of a criminal case by plea, deferred prosecution, or dismissal prior to an administrative setting.

(c) Definite Trial Date. – When a case has not otherwise been scheduled for trial within 120 days of indictment or of service of notice of indictment if required by law, then upon motion by the defendant at any time thereafter, the senior resident superior court judge, or a superior court judge designated by the senior resident superior court judge, may hold a hearing for the purpose of establishing a trial date for the defendant.

(d) Venue for Administrative Settings. – Venue for administrative settings may be in any county within the district when necessary to comply with the terms of the criminal case docketing plan. The presence of the defendant is only required for administrative settings held in the county where the case originated.

(e) Setting and Publishing of Trial Calendar. – No less than 10 working days before cases are calendared for trial, the district attorney shall publish the trial calendar. The trial calendar shall schedule the cases in the order in which the district attorney anticipates they will be called for trial and should not contain cases that the district attorney does not reasonably expect to be called for trial. In counties in which multiple sessions of court are being held, the district attorney may publish a trial calendar for each session of court.

(f) Order of Trial. – The district attorney, after calling the calendar and determining cases for pleas and other disposition, shall announce to the court the order in which the district attorney intends to call for trial the cases remaining on the calendar. Deviations from the announced order require approval by the presiding judge if the defendant whose case is called for trial objects; but the defendant may not object if all the cases scheduled to be heard before the defendant's case have been disposed of or delayed with the approval of the presiding judge or by consent of the State and the defendant. A case may be continued from the trial calendar only by consent of the State and the defendant or upon order of the presiding judge or resident superior court judge for good cause shown. The district attorney, after consultation with the parties, shall schedule a new trial date for cases not reached during that session of court.

(g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to deprive any victim of the rights granted under Article I, Section 37 of the North Carolina Constitution and Article 46 of Chapter 15A of the General Statutes.

(h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the authority of the court in the call of cases calendared for trial. (1999-428, s. 1.)

§ 7A-49.5. Statewide electronic filing in courts.

(a) The General Assembly finds that the electronic filing of pleadings and other documents required to be filed with the courts may be a more economical, efficient, and satisfactory procedure to handle the volumes of paperwork routinely filed with, handled by, and disseminated by the courts of this State, and therefore authorizes the use of electronic filing in the courts of this State.

(b) The Supreme Court may adopt rules governing this process and associated costs and may supervise its implementation and operation through the Administrative Office of the Courts. The rules adopted under this section shall address the waiver of electronic fees for indigents.

(b1) The Supreme Court shall promulgate rules authorizing electronic filing and electronic signatures in the General Court of Justice. The rules shall require registration to participate in electronic filing and provide security procedures that include a mandatory submission of a form of identification to electronically file pro se.

(c) The Administrative Office of the Courts may contract with a vendor to provide electronic filing in the courts.

(d) Any funds received by the Administrative Office of the Courts from the vendor selected pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, other than applicable statutory court costs, as a result of electronic filing, shall be deposited in the Court Information Technology Fund in accordance with G.S. 7A-343.2.

(e) The Supreme Court may require that in all cases in which the seal of any court or judicial office is required by law to be affixed to any paper issuing from a court or office, the word

"seal" shall be construed to include an impression of the official seal, made upon the paper alone, an impression made by means of a wafer or of wax affixed thereto, or an electronic image adopted as the official seal affixed thereto. (2006-187, s. 2(c); 2007-323, s. 14.17(c); 2012-142, s. 16.5(f); 2019-243, s. 3(a); 2022-47, s. 16(a).)

§ 7A-49.6. Proceedings conducted by audio and video transmission.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, judicial officials may conduct proceedings of all types using an audio and video transmission in which the parties, the presiding official, and any other participants can see and hear each other. Judicial officials conducting proceedings by audio and video transmission under this section must safeguard the constitutional rights of those persons involved in the proceeding and preserve the integrity of the judicial process.

(b) Each party to a proceeding involving audio and video transmission must be able to communicate fully and confidentially with his or her attorney if the party is represented by an attorney.

(c) In a civil proceeding involving a jury, the court may allow a witness to testify by audio and video transmission only upon finding in the record that good cause exists for doing so under the circumstances.

(d) A party may object to conducting a civil proceeding by audio and video transmission. If the presiding official finds that the party has demonstrated good cause for the objection, the proceeding must not be held by audio and video transmission. If there is no objection, or if there is an objection and good cause is not shown, the presiding official may conduct the proceeding by audio and video transmission.

(e) Except as otherwise permitted by law, when the right to confront witnesses or be present is implicated in criminal or juvenile delinquency proceedings, the court may not proceed by audio and video transmission unless the court has obtained a knowing, intelligent, and voluntary waiver of the defendant's or juvenile respondent's rights.

(f) Proceedings conducted by audio and video transmission shall be held in a manner that complies with any applicable federal and State laws governing the confidentiality and security of confidential information.

(g) If the proceeding is one that is open to the public, then the presiding official must facilitate access to the proceeding by the public and the media as nearly as practicable to the access that would be available were the proceeding conducted in person.

(h) If the proceeding is required by law to be recorded, then the audio and video transmission must be recorded in accordance with G.S. 7A-95, G.S. 7A-198, and other laws, as applicable.

(i) This section is not intended to limit the court's authority to receive remote testimony pursuant to statutes that otherwise permit it, including G.S. 15A-1225.1, 15A-1225.2, 15A-1225.3, 20-139.1, 8C-1, Rule 616, 50A-111, and 52C-3-315(f).

(j) All proceedings under this section shall be conducted using videoconferencing applications approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

(k) As used herein, the term "judicial official" has the same meaning as in G.S. 15A-101(5). (2021-47, s. 9(a).)