GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2017

Legislative Incarceration Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 325 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Amend Arson Law/Prosecutor Funds. **SPONSOR(S)**: Representatives McNeill and Hurley

FISCAL IMPACT (\$ in millions)								
	□ Yes	□No	No Estimat					
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22			
State Impact								
General Fund Revenues:								
General Fund Expenditures								
State Positions:								
NET STATE IMPACT	Likely budge	t cost. See Assum	ptions & Methodolo	gy section for additi	onal details.			
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: Administrative Office of the Courts; Indigent Defense Services; Department of Public Safety								
EFFECTIVE DATE: 1	December 1, 2017							
TECHNICAL CONSI	DERATIONS:							

FISCAL IMPACT SUMMARY:

The proposed bill may have a fiscal impact to address new or expanded offenses being enforced, adjudicated, and having penalties applied to those convicted of the new offenses. However, given that there is no historical data on these offenses the Fiscal Research Division cannot reasonably estimate the total additional costs that may be incurred. The following costs may be incurred for every one person charged and convicted of these crimes:

- Administrative Office of the Courts: \$2,017 to \$4,320 per disposition
- Indigent Defense Services: \$375 to \$961 per indigent defendant
- Department of Public Safety (DPS) Prisons: \$12,339 to \$30,162 per active sentence
- DPS Community Corrections: Minimum of \$1,776

Please see the Assumptions and Methodology section for additional information.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 of the bill creates new G.S. 14-67.2, Burning caused during commission of another felony, which includes a new Class D felony offense for knowingly damaging or helping someone else damage any building while in the commission of another felony offense.

Section 2 of the bill amends existing G.S. 14-69.3, Arson or other unlawful burning that results in serious injury to a firefighter or emergency medical technician, to include law enforcement officers and fire investigators in the list of covered victims for the Class E felony.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

General

The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission prepares prison population projections for each bill containing a criminal penalty. The Commission assumes for such bills that expanding existing or creating new criminal offenses produces no deterrent or incapacitative effect on crime. Therefore, the Fiscal Research Division does not assume deterrent effects for any criminal penalty bill.

S.L. 2011-192 (H.B. 642), the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA), made changes to North Carolina's court system, corrections system (both to prisons and probation), and to post-release supervision. All active sentences for felony offenses now result in a minimum of twelve months of post-release supervision (PRS) for B1-E level offenses and a minimum of nine months of PRS for F-I level offenses.

JRA also created the Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program (SMCP) for housing misdemeanants with sentences between 90 and 180 days in county jails (misdemeanants with shorter sentences were already the responsibility of the counties). County participation in the program is voluntary. The SMCP pays participating counties for misdemeanants' housing, transportation, and medical costs. In 2014, the program was expanded to include all misdemeanants with sentences longer than 90 days. The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission does not track county jail capacity, so it is not possible to estimate the impact of new or increased misdemeanor penalties on county jails.

SECTION 1

Judicial Branch

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides Fiscal Research with a fiscal impact analysis for most criminal penalty bills. For such bills, fiscal impact is typically based on the assumption that court time will increase due to anticipated increases in trials and corresponding increases in workload for judges, clerks, and prosecutors. This increased court time is also expected to result in greater expenditures for jury fees and indigent defense.

Section 1 of the bill creates a new Class D felony offense. The new offense created in Section 1 of the bill appears to offer the prosecution another Class D felony option, other than the existing offense of first-degree arson. The new offense is likely to supplant existing charges other than first-degree arson when there is another felony also being charged (most likely when the other felony is non-arson related, such as a robbery, etc.). For example, the other arson charges may range from burning a church/religious building (a Class E felony); burning a building under construction, fraudulently burning a dwelling, or burning personal property (all Class H felonies); burning a school house or burning certain other buildings (Class F felonies). The new offense may also have a similar effect on the existing charges for solicitation and conspiracy to commit arson. Because AOC does not have data on how many current offenses would be upgraded to the new Class D felony, it is not possible to accurately estimate the potential impact to the courts. AOC

provides estimates of the average cost to the court for a charge by offense class. For every additional person charged with a Class D felony, the average cost to the court would be \$4,320. The following chart shows the current offense class that could be charged compared to the new offense class and the cost difference for each.

AOC Cost Differential by Felony Class FY 2016-17							
Statute	Offense	Class	Cost	New Class	Cost	Difference	
14-58	Arson in the first degree	D	\$4,320	D	\$4,320	NA	
14-58.2	Burning of mobile home	D	\$4,320	D	\$4,320	NA	
14-62.2	Burning of religious buildings	E	\$2,017	D	\$4,320	\$2,303	
14-59	Burning of public buildings	F	\$1,137	D	\$4,320	\$3,183	
14-60	Burning of educational institutions	F	\$1,137	D	\$4,320	\$3,183	
14-61	Burning of bridges and buildings	F	\$1,137	D	\$4,320	\$3,183	
14-62	Burning of buildings	F	\$1,137	D	\$4,320	\$3,183	
14-58	Arson in the second degree	G	\$938	D	\$4,320	\$3,382	
14-62.1	Burning of building under construction	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	
14-63	Burning of boats and barges	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	
14-64	Burning of ginhouses and tobacco houses	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	
14-65	Fraudulently setting fire to dwellings	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	
14-66	Burning of personal property	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	
14-67.1	Burning other buildings	Н	\$625	D	\$4,320	\$3,695	

The Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS) has provided Fiscal Research with the frequency and cost of indigent defense services for each level of crime, including the cost differentials for district and superior court with and without a trial and the percentage of cases handled in each category. Fiscal Research used this data to calculate a weighted average of IDS costs. In FY 2011-12, the most recent year data is available, 89% of Class D felony cases were handled through IDS. The weighted average cost of a new Class D felony is \$961 per case for a private appointed counsel (PAC) attorney. The chart below shows the current offense class that could be charged compared to the new offense class and the cost difference for each.

	IDS Cost Differential by Felony Class FY 2016-17							
C4-44-	Office	Class	C4	New	C4	D:66		
Statute	Offense	Class	Cost	Class	Cost	Difference		
14-58	Arson in the first degree	D	\$961	D	\$961	NA		
14-58.2	Burning of mobile home	D	\$961	D	\$961	NA		
14-62.2	Burning of religious buildings	E	\$586	D	\$961	\$375		
14-59	Burning of public buildings	F	\$569	D	\$961	\$392		
14-60	Burning of educational institutions	F	\$569	D	\$961	\$392		
14-61	Burning of bridges and buildings	F	\$569	D	\$961	\$392		
14-62	Burning of buildings	F	\$569	D	\$961	\$392		
14-58	Arson in the second degree	G	\$498	D	\$961	\$463		
14-62.1	Burning of building under construction	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		
14-63	Burning of boats and barges	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		
14-64	Burning of ginhouses and tobacco houses	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		
14-65	Fraudulently setting fire to dwellings	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		
14-66	Burning of personal property	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		
14-67.1	Burning other buildings	Н	\$392	D	\$961	\$569		

These estimates assume the appointment of a PAC attorney. In districts that have Public Defender offices, cases may be handled by those offices. In those instances, these costs may not be incurred.

Department of Public Safety - Prisons

The chart below depicts the projected inmate population relative to available prison bed capacity systemwide. Capacity projections assume operation at Expanded Operating Capacity, and represent the total number of beds in operation, or authorized for construction or operation as of December 2016.

Based on the most recent population projections and estimated bed capacity, there are surplus prison beds available for the five-year fiscal note horizon and beyond. Therefore, no additional beds will be required unless the projected number of additional inmates resulting from a bill (row four) exceeds the projected number of beds under the inmate population (row three).

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¹ Expanded Operating Capacity (EOC) is: 1) the number of single cells housing one inmate, 2) the number of single cells housing two inmates, and 3) the number of beds in dormitories, allowing between 35 (130% of Standard Operating Capacity) and 50 (SOC) square feet per inmate.

Population Projections and Bed Capacity Five Year Impact							
	June 30 2018	June 30 2019	June 30 2020	June 30 2021	June 30 2022		
1. Inmates ²	37,304	37,601	37,367	37,385	37,642		
2. Prison Beds (Expanded Capacity)	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373		
3. Beds Over/(Under) Inmate Population	1,069	772	1,006	988	731		
4. Additional Inmates Due to this Bill ³ No estimate available							
5. Additional Beds Required							

Since Section 1 of the bill creates a new offense, the Sentencing Commission does not have any historical data from which to estimate the impact of this bill on the prison population. A threshold analysis is provided when it is not known how many offenders might be convicted and sentenced as a result of the proposed change. For each offense class, the threshold estimate is the number of convictions that result in the need for one prison bed in the first year.

In FY 2015-16, 98% of Class D felony convictions resulted in active sentences, with an average estimated time served of 66 months. Twelve months of post-release supervision is required upon release from prison following an active sentence or revocation of probation. The following table shows the estimated annual impact if there was one conviction (the threshold) or 20 convictions for this proposed offense per year. The five year estimate takes into account the combination of active sentences and probation and post-release supervision violations resulting in confinement, as well as growth rates adopted by the Sentencing Commission's Forecasting Technical Advisory Group.

Estimated Prison Bed Impact Using Threshold Convictions and 20 Convictions Class D Felony								
Convictions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5			
1 (Threshold)	1	2	3	4	5			
20	20	41	61	82	102			

Since the new offense must occur during the commission of another felony, additional impact would occur if the sentence for the companion offense is run consecutive to the proposed Class D felony offense.

Some of the conduct covered by the proposed offense may currently be prosecuted in one of the existing offenses listed below, if the conduct occurred in conjunction with another felony offense. It is unclear whether a prosecution for this new felony would preempt the prosecution of any other burning related offenses, or if the two felonies could be charged in conjunction.

² The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission prepares inmate population projections annually. These projections are derived from: historical information on incarceration and release rates under Structured Sentencing; crime rate forecasts by a technical advisory group; probation and offender revocation rates; and the decline (parole and max-outs) of the stock prison population sentenced under prior sentencing acts. Projections were updated in February 2017.

³ Criminal penalty bills effective December 1, 2017 should not affect prison population and bed needs until FY 2018-19 due to the lag time between offense charge and sentencing - six months on average. No delayed effect is presumed for the Court System.

	Arson Crimes by Felony Class FY 2016-17							
Statute	Offense	Class	Percent Active	Active Sentence Length (Months)	Percent Probation	Probation Sentence Length (Months)		
14-58	Arson in the first degree	D	98%	66	2%	40		
14-58.2	Burning of mobile home	D	98%	66	2%	40		
14-62.2	Burning of religious buildings	E	63%	27	37%	33		
14-59	Burning of public buildings	F	50%	17	50%	32		
14-60	Burning of educational institutions	F	50%	17	50%	32		
14-61	Burning of bridges and buildings	F	50%	17	50%	32		
14-62	Burning of buildings	F	50%	17	50%	32		
14-58	Arson in the second degree	G	39%	14	61%	29		
14-62.1	Burning of building under construction	Н	35%	11	65%	27		
14-63	Burning of boats and barges	Н	35%	11	65%	27		
14-64	Burning of ginhouses and tobacco houses	Н	35%	11	65%	27		
14-65	Fraudulently setting fire to dwellings	Н	35%	11	65%	27		
14-66	Burning of personal property	Н	35%	11	65%	27		
14-67.1	Burning other buildings	Н	35%	11	65%	27		

There would be no additional prison impact if any of the Class D convictions listed above were convicted as a violation of the proposed Class D instead. Impact on the prison population will occur if any of the Class E, Class F, Class G, or Class H arson/burning convictions listed above become Class D convictions under the proposed statute because of the higher rates of active sentences (63% for Class E, 50% for Class F, 39% for Class G, and 35% for Class H compared to the required active sentence for the proposed Class D) and longer average estimated time served (27 months for Class E, 17 months for Class F, 14 months for Class G, and 11 months for Class H compared to 66 months for the proposed Class D).

In addition to the capital costs that may be associated with additional bed needs, there are also per diem costs for housing inmates. The cost to add one additional inmate to the prison system is \$15.02 per day, or \$457 per month, which includes the cost of food, clothing, and health care. In FY 2015-16, 98% of Class D felony offenders received active sentences averaging 66 months. For every one Class D felony offender receiving an active sentence, the cost to the prison section will be \$30,162 (\$457 monthly cost times 66 months). The following table shows the cost at the current offense level and the difference from the proposed Class D offense level.

Cost of Active Sentence for Current Offense Class vs. New Offense Class FY 2016-17								
Statuta	Offense	Class	Percent	Active Sentence Length	Per Diem	Difference from Class D Cost		
Statute 14-58	Arson in the first degree	D	Active 98%	(Months) 66	Cost \$30,162	\$30,162 NA		
14-58.2	Burning of mobile home	D	98%	66	\$30,162	NA NA		
14-62.2	Burning of religious buildings	Е	63%	27	\$12,339	\$17,823		
14-59	Burning of public buildings	F	50%	17	\$7,769	\$22,393		
14-60	Burning of educational institutions	F	50%	17	\$7,769	\$22,393		
14-61	Burning of bridges and buildings	F	50%	17	\$7,769	\$22,393		
14-62	Burning of buildings	F	50%	17	\$7,769	\$22,393		
14-58	Arson in the second degree	G	39%	14	\$6,398	\$23,764		
14-62.1	Burning of building under construction	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		
14-63	Burning of boats and barges	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		
14-64	Burning of ginhouses and tobacco houses	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		
14-65	Fraudulently setting fire to dwellings	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		
14-66	Burning of personal property	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		
14-67.1	Burning other buildings	Н	35%	11	\$5,027	\$25,135		

Department of Public Safety – Community Corrections

All active sentences for felony offenses now result in a minimum of twelve months of post-release supervision (PRS) for B1-E level offenses and a minimum of nine months of PRS for F-I level offenses. Additionally, for felony offense classes F through I offenders may be given non-active (intermediate or community) sentences exclusively, or in conjunction with imprisonment (split-sentence). Sanctions include electronic house arrest, community service, substance abuse treatment, participation in educational or vocational skills development, payment of court costs, fines, and restitution, and short-term jail sentences not exceeding six days per month.

JRA essentially eliminated the distinction between "community" and "intermediate" supervision. Under structured sentencing, the two types of supervision were each defined by a set of specific sanctions. Under JRA, both community and intermediate probation may now include electronic monitoring, short-term periods of confinement, substance abuse assessment, monitoring, and treatment, participation in educational programs or vocational skills development. Whether a probationer is subject to more stringent conditions is determined by the results of a risk-needs assessment administered by the Department of Public Safety.

All types of post-release supervision are supervised by the Community Corrections Section (CCS); CCS also oversees community service. Supervision by a probation officer costs \$148 per offender, per month; no cost is assumed for those receiving unsupervised probation, or who are only ordered to pay fines, fees, or restitution. Total costs are based on average supervision length and the percentage of offenders (per offense class) sentenced to active sentences requiring post-release supervision and supervised probations.

In FY 2015-16, 98% of Class D felony offenders received active sentences. All active sentences for Class B1 through D felonies result in 12 months of post-release supervision (PRS). Therefore one conviction

resulting from this bill will require at least 12 months of supervision. The cost of 12 months of supervision is \$1,776 per offender (\$148 per month times 12 months).⁴

	Probationary Sentences for Arson Crimes by Felony Class FY 2016-17							
Statute	Offense	Class	Percent Probation	Probation Sentence Length (Months)	PRS			
14-58	Arson in the first degree	D	2%	40	12			
14-58.2	Burning of mobile home	D	2%	40	12			
14-62.2	Burning of religious buildings	Е	37%	33	12			
14-59	Burning of public buildings	F	50%	32	9			
14-60	Burning of educational institutions	F	50%	32	9			
14-61	Burning of bridges and buildings	F	50%	32	9			
14-62	Burning of buildings	F	50%	32	9			
14-58	Arson in the second degree	G	61%	29	9			
14-62.1	Burning of building under construction	Н	65%	27	9			
14-63	Burning of boats and barges	Н	65%	27	9			
14-64	Burning of ginhouses and tobacco houses	Н	65%	27	9			
14-65	Fraudulently setting fire to dwellings	Н	65%	27	9			
14-66	Burning of personal property	Н	65%	27	9			
14-67.1	Burning other buildings	Н	65%	27	9			

SECTION 2

Judicial Branch

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides Fiscal Research with a fiscal impact analysis for most criminal penalty bills. For such bills, fiscal impact is typically based on the assumption that court time will increase due to anticipated increases in trials and corresponding increases in workload for judges, clerks, and prosecutors. This increased court time is also expected to result in greater expenditures for jury fees and indigent defense.

Section 2 of the bill expands the scope of an existing Class E felony offense. AOC does not have historical data upon which to estimate the number of charges that might occur. AOC provides estimates of the average cost to the court for a charge by offense class. For every additional person charged with a Class E felony, the average cost to the court would be \$2,017.

The Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS) has provided Fiscal Research with the frequency and cost of indigent defense services for each level of crime, including the cost differentials for district and superior court with and without a trial and the percentage of cases handled in each category. Fiscal Research used this data to calculate a weighted average of IDS costs. In FY 2011-12, the most recent year data is available, 79% of Class E felony cases were handled through IDS. The weighted average cost of a new Class E felony is \$586 per case for a private appointed counsel (PAC) attorney. This estimate assumes the

⁴ Due to the effective date of December 1, 2017 and the typical lag time between charge and conviction (6 months), little impact is assumed for CCS in FY 2017-18. Though some offenders may come under CCS supervision during this time, this note assumes an even entry over the course of FY 2018-19.

appointment of a PAC attorney. In districts that have Public Defender offices, cases may be handled by those offices. In those instances, this cost may not be incurred.

Department of Public Safety - Prisons

The chart below depicts the projected inmate population relative to available prison bed capacity systemwide. Capacity projections assume operation at Expanded Operating Capacity,⁵ and represent the total number of beds in operation, or authorized for construction or operation as of December 2016.

Based on the most recent population projections and estimated bed capacity, there are surplus prison beds available for the five-year fiscal note horizon and beyond. Therefore, no additional beds will be required unless the projected number of additional inmates resulting from a bill (row four) exceeds the projected number of beds under the inmate population (row three).

Population Projections and Bed Capacity Five Year Impact							
	June 30 2018	June 30 2019	June 30 2020	June 30 2021	June 30 2022		
1. Inmates ⁶	37,304	37,601	37,367	37,385	37,642		
2. Prison Beds (Expanded Capacity)	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373	38,373		
3. Beds Over/(Under) Inmate Population	1,069	772	1,006	988	731		
4. Additional Inmates Due to this Bill ⁷ No estimate a				ilable			
5. Additional Beds Required							

Since the bill expands the scope of an existing offense, the Sentencing Commission does not have any historical data from which to estimate the impact of this bill on the prison population. A threshold analysis is provided when it is not known how many offenders might be convicted and sentenced as a result of the proposed change. For each offense class, the threshold estimate is the number of convictions that result in the need for one prison bed in the first year.

In FY 2015-16, 63% of Class E felony convictions resulted in active sentences, with an average estimated time served of 27 months. Twelve months of post-release supervision is required upon release from prison following an active sentence or revocation of probation. The following table shows the estimated annual impact if there were two convictions (the threshold) or 20 convictions for this proposed offense per year. The five year estimate takes into account the combination of active sentences and probation and post-release supervision violations resulting in confinement, as well as growth rates adopted by the Sentencing Commission's Forecasting Technical Advisory Group.

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⁵ Expanded Operating Capacity (EOC) is: 1) the number of single cells housing one inmate, 2) the number of single cells housing two inmates, and 3) the number of beds in dormitories, allowing between 35 (130% of Standard Operating Capacity) and 50 (SOC) square feet per inmate.

⁶ The Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission prepares inmate population projections annually. These projections are derived from: historical information on incarceration and release rates under Structured Sentencing; crime rate forecasts by a technical advisory group; probation and offender revocation rates; and the decline (parole and max-outs) of the stock prison population sentenced under prior sentencing acts. Projections were updated in February 2017.

⁷ Criminal penalty bills effective December 1, 2017 should not affect prison population and bed needs until FY 2018-19 due to the lag time between offense charge and sentencing - six months on average. No delayed effect is presumed for the Court System.

Estimated Prison Bed Impact Using Threshold Convictions and 20 Convictions Class E Felony								
Convictions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5			
2 (Threshold)	1	3	3	3	3			
20	13	28	34	34	35			

In addition to the capital costs that may be associated with additional bed needs, there are also per diem costs for housing inmates. The cost to add one additional inmate to the prison system is \$15.02 per day, or \$457 per month, which includes the cost of food, clothing, and health care. In FY 2015-16, 63% of Class E felony offenders received active sentences averaging 79 months. For every one Class E felony offender receiving an active sentence, the cost to the prison section will be \$12,339 (\$457 monthly cost times 27 months).

Department of Public Safety – Community Corrections

All active sentences for felony offenses now result in a minimum of twelve months of post-release supervision (PRS) for B1-E level offenses and a minimum of nine months of PRS for F-I level offenses. Additionally, for felony offense classes F through I offenders may be given non-active (intermediate or community) sentences exclusively, or in conjunction with imprisonment (split-sentence). Sanctions include electronic house arrest, community service, substance abuse treatment, participation in educational or vocational skills development, payment of court costs, fines, and restitution, and short-term jail sentences not exceeding six days per month.

JRA essentially eliminated the distinction between "community" and "intermediate" supervision. Under structured sentencing, the two types of supervision were each defined by a set of specific sanctions. Under JRA, both community and intermediate probation may now include electronic monitoring, short-term periods of confinement, substance abuse assessment, monitoring, and treatment, participation in educational programs or vocational skills development. Whether a probationer is subject to more stringent conditions is determined by the results of a risk-needs assessment administered by the Department of Public Safety.

All types of post-release supervision are supervised by the Community Corrections Section (CCS); CCS also oversees community service. Supervision by a probation officer costs \$148 per offender, per month; no cost is assumed for those receiving unsupervised probation, or who are only ordered to pay fines, fees, or restitution. Total costs are based on average supervision length and the percentage of offenders (per offense class) sentenced to active sentences requiring post-release supervision and supervised probations.

In FY 2015-16, 63% of Class E felony offenders received active sentences. All active sentences for Class E felonies result in 12 months of post-release supervision (PRS). The average length of probation imposed for this offense class was 33 months. Therefore, at a minimum, one conviction resulting from this bill will require at least 12 months of supervision. The cost of 12 months of supervision is \$1,776 per offender (\$148 per month times 12 months). For every offender sentenced to probation, the average cost would be \$4,884 (\$148 per month times 33 months).

SOURCES OF DATA: Department of Public Safety; Administrative Office of the Courts; North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission; Office of Indigent Defense Services.

⁸ Due to the effective date of December 1, 2017 and the typical lag time between charge and conviction (6 months), little impact is assumed for CCS in FY 2017-18. Though some offenders may come under CCS supervision during this time, this note assumes an even entry over the course of FY 2018-19.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION: (919) 733-4910

PREPARED BY: Kristine Leggett

APPROVED BY:

Mark Trogdon, Director Fiscal Research Division

DATE: April 3, 2017



Signed Copy Located in the NCGA Principal Clerk's Offices