

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019**

**SESSION LAW 2020-68
HOUSE BILL 885**

AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT ONLY ONE FEE MAY BE ASSESSED TO A DEFENDANT
FOR FAILING TO APPEAR IN COURT IN A CRIMINAL CASE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 7A-304(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) In every criminal case in the superior or district court, wherein the defendant is convicted, or enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, or when costs are assessed against the prosecuting witness, the following costs shall be assessed and collected. No costs may be assessed when a case is dismissed. Only upon entry of a written order, supported by findings of fact and conclusions of law, determining that there is just cause, the court may (i) waive costs assessed under this section or (ii) waive or reduce costs assessed under subdivision (7), (8), (8a), (11), (12), or (13) of this subsection. No court may waive or remit all or part of any court fines or costs without providing notice and opportunity to be heard by all government entities directly affected. The court shall provide notice to the government entities directly affected of (i) the date and time of the hearing and (ii) the right to be heard and make an objection to the remission or waiver of all or part of the order of court costs at least 15 days prior to hearing. Notice shall be made to the government entities affected by first-class mail to the address provided for receipt of court costs paid pursuant to the order. The costs are listed below:

...

- (6) For support of the General Court of Justice, the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) is payable by a defendant who fails to appear to answer the charge as scheduled, unless within 20 days after the scheduled appearance, the person either appears in court to answer the charge or disposes of the charge pursuant to G.S. 7A-146, and the sum of fifty dollars (\$50.00) is payable by a defendant who fails to pay a fine, penalty, or costs within 40 days of the date specified in the court's judgment. The fee for failure to appear shall only be collected once in a criminal case. Upon a showing to the court that the defendant failed to appear because of an error or omission of a judicial official, a prosecutor, or a law-enforcement officer, the court shall waive the fee for failure to appear. These fees shall be remitted to the State Treasurer.

...."



SECTION 2. This act becomes effective December 1, 2020, and applies to costs assessed on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 25th day of June, 2020.

s/ Daniel J. Forest
President of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 5:25 p.m. this 1st day of July, 2020