GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2007

S SENATE BILL 1281

Short Title:	Omnibus Courts Amendments.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Senator Snow.	
Referred to:	Appropriations/Base Budget.	
March 26, 2007		
A BILL TO BE ENTITLED AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW AFFECTING THE STATE COURT SYSTEM. The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts: SECTION 1. G.S. 7A-343 reads as rewritten:		
"§ 7A-343. Duties of Director.		
	tor is the Administrative Officer of the Courts, and his duties in	clude the
following:		
(1)	Collect and compile statistical data and other information judicial and financial operation of the courts and on the ope other offices directly related to and serving the courts;	
(2)	Determine the state of the dockets and evaluate the praction procedures of the courts, and make recommendations conce number of judges, district attorneys, and magistrates require efficient administration of justice;	rning the
(3)	Prescribe uniform administrative and business methods, forms and records to be used in the offices of the clerks of court;	
(4)	Prepare and submit budget estimates of State appropriations of the maintenance and operation of the Judicial Department authorize expenditures from funds appropriated for these purp	nent, and
(5)	Investigate, make recommendations concerning, and assist securing of adequate physical accommodations for the Gene of Justice;	st in the
(6)	Procure, distribute, exchange, transfer, and assign such edbooks, forms and supplies as are to be acquired with State the General Court of Justice;	

Make recommendations for the improvement of the operations of the

(7)

Judicial Department;

- 1 (8) Prepare and submit an annual report on the work of the Judicial 2 Department to the Chief Justice, and transmit a copy to each member 3 of the General Assembly; 4 Assist the Chief Justice in performing his duties relating to the transfer (9) 5 of district court judges for temporary or specialized duty; 6 (9a) Establish and operate systems and services that provide for electronic 7 filing in the court system and further provide electronic transaction 8 processing and access to court information systems pursuant to 9 G.S. 7A-343.2; and 10 (9b) Enter into contracts with one or more private vendors to provide for 11 the payment of fines, fees, and costs due to the court by credit, charge, 12 or debit cards; such contracts may provide for the assessment of a 13 convenience or transaction fee by the vendor to cover the costs of 14 providing this service; 15 (9c) 16
 - (9c) Prescribe policies and procedures for the appointment and payment of foreign language interpreters in those cases specified in G.S. 7A-314(f). These policies and procedures shall be applied uniformly throughout the General Court of Justice. These policies and procedures may include reasonable fees, to be set by the Director, for interpreter training and testing. These fees shall not exceed the costs incurred by the Judicial Department in providing the training and testing. After consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Director may also convert contractual foreign language interpreter positions to permanent State positions when the Director determines that it is more cost-effective to do so;
 - (9d) Analyze the use of contractual positions in the Judicial Department and, after consultation with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, convert contractual positions to permanent State positions when the Director determines it is in the best interests of the Judicial Department to do so; and
 - (10) Perform such additional duties and exercise such additional powers as may be prescribed by statute or assigned by the Chief Justice."

SECTION 2. G.S. 7A-794 and G.S. 7A-798 are repealed.

SECTION 3. G.S. 7A-801 reads as rewritten:

"§ 7A-801. Plan for evaluation. Monitoring and annual report.

The Administrative Office of the Courts shall develop a statewide model and conduct ongoing evaluations of monitor all State-recognized and funded local drug treatment court programs. A report of these evaluations shall be submitted courts, prepare an annual report on the implementation, operation, and effectiveness of the statewide drug treatment court program, and submit the report to the General Assembly by March 1 of each year. Each local drug treatment court program shall submit evaluation reports to the Administrative Office of the Courts as requested."

SECTION 4. G.S. 7A-314(f) reads as rewritten:

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"(f) In any case in which the Judicial Department is bearing the costs of representation for a party and that party or a witness for that party does not speak or understand the English language, and the court appoints a foreign language interpreter to assist that party or witness, the reasonable fee for the interpreter's services is payable from funds appropriated to the Administrative Office of the Courts. The court may also appoint an interpreter, payable from funds appropriated to the Administrative Office of the Courts, in cases where an interpreter is necessary to assist the court in the efficient transaction of business. The appointment and payment shall be made in accordance with G.S. 7A-343(9c)."

SECTION 5. G.S. 7A-10(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) The Chief Justice and each of the associate justices shall receive the annual salary provided in Current Operations Appropriations Act. The Chief Justice shall receive an annual salary that is at least two and seven-tenths percent (2.7%) greater than the salary of the associate justices. Each justice is entitled to reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses at the rate allowed State employees generally."

SECTION 6. G.S. 7A-18(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) The Chief Judge and each associate judge of the Court of Appeals shall receive the annual salary provided in the Current Operations Appropriations Act. The Chief Judge shall receive an annual salary that is at least two and seven-tenths percent (2.7%) greater than the salary of the associate judges. Each judge is entitled to reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses at the rate allowed State employees generally."

SECTION 7. This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.