GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2017

H D

HOUSE BILL 717

Committee Substitute Favorable 6/26/17 Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 10/4/17 Committee Substitute #3 Favorable 10/4/17 Fifth Edition Engrossed 10/5/17

Senate Select Committee on Elections Committee Substitute Adopted 6/4/18 Corrected Copy 6/5/18

Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate Committee Substitute Adopted 6/6/18 Proposed Conference Committee Substitute H717-PCCS40777-BK-3

Short Title:	Judicial Elections Changes.	(Public)
Sponsors:		
Referred to:		

April 11, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REVISE THE JUDICIAL DIVISIONS; TO MAKE CERTAIN ADJUSTMENTS
TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF COUNTIES TO THE SUPERIOR COURT, DISTRICT
COURT, AND PROSECUTORIAL DISTRICTS; TO CLARIFY LISTING OF JUDICIAL
SEATS ON THE BALLOT; AND TO LIMIT ROTATION OF SUPERIOR COURT
JUDGES TO SIX MONTHS PER YEAR.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 7A-41, as amended by S.L. 2018-5, reads as rewritten:

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

(a) 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:

14		Superior		
15	Judicial	Court		No. of Resident
16	Division	District	Counties	Judges
17				
18	First	1	Camden, Chowan,	2
19			Currituck,	
20			Dare, Gates,	
21			Pasquotank,	
22			Perquimans	
23	First	2	Beaufort, Hyde,	1
24			Martin,	
25			Tyrrell, Washington	
26	First	3A	Pitt	2
27	Second	3B	Carteret, Craven,	3
28			Pamlico	
29	Second	<u>4A4</u>	Duplin, Jones, Onslow,	<u> 42</u>



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			Sampson		
	Second	4 B	Onslow	1	
	Second	5A	(part of New Hanover,	1	
			part of Pender		
			see subsection (b))		
		5B	(part of New Hanover,	1	
			part of Pender		
			see subsection (b))		
		5C	(part of New Hanover,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	First	6A	Halifax	1	
	First	6B	Bertie, Hertford,	1	
			Northampton		
	First	7A	Nash	1	
	First	7B	(part of Wilson,	1	
			part of Edgecombe,		
			see subsection (b))		
	First	7C	(part of Wilson,	1	
			part of Edgecombe,		
			see subsection (b))		
	Second	8A	Lenoir and Greene	1	
	Second	8B	Wayne	1	
	ThirdFirst	9	Franklin, Granville,	2	
			Person, Vance, Warren		
	Third	10A	(part of Wake,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	Third	10B	(part of Wake,	<u>21</u>	
			see subsection (b))		
	Third	10C	(part of Wake,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	Third	10D	(part of Wake,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	<u>Third</u>	<u>10E</u>	(part of Wake,	<u>1</u>	
			see subsection (b))		
	<u>Third</u>	<u>10F</u>	(part of Wake,	<u>1</u>	
			see subsection (b))	_	
	Fourth Third	11A	Harnett,	1	
			Lee		
	Fourth Third	11B	Johnston	1	
	Fourth Third	12A	(part of Cumberland,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	Fourth Third	12B	(part of Cumberland,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	Fourth Third	12C	(part of Cumberland,	2	
			see subsection (b))		
	FourthSecond	13A	Bladen, Columbus	1	
	Fourth Second	13B	Brunswick	1	
	ThirdFirst	14A	(part of Durham,	1	
			see subsection (b))		
	ThirdFirst	14B	(part of Durham,	3	
			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		

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	General Assembly Of North Carolina			Session 2017	
1	Third	15A	Alamance	2	
2	Third Fourth	15B	Orange, Chatham	2	
3	Fourth Third	16A	Anson, Richmond,	2	
4			Scotland, HokeScotland		
5	FourthSecond	16B	Robeson	2	
6	FifthFourth	17A	Caswell, Rockingham	2	
7	FifthFourth	17B	Stokes, Surry	1	
8	FifthFourth	18A	(part of Guilford,	1	
9			see subsection (b))		
10	FifthFourth	18B	(part of Guilford,	1	
11			see subsection (b))		
12	FifthFourth	18C	(part of Guilford,	1	
13			see subsection (b))		
14	Fifth Fourth	18D	(part of Guilford,	1	
15			see subsection (b))		
16	Fifth Fourth	18E	(part of Guilford,	1	
17			see subsection (b))		
18	Sixth Fourth	19A	Cabarrus	1	
19	Fifth Third	19B	Montgomery, Randolph	2	
20	SixthFourth	19C	Rowan	1	
21	Fourth Third	19D	Hoke, Moore		
22	SixthThird	20A	Montgomery, Stanly	<u> 12</u> 1 <u>2</u>	
23	Sixth Third	20B	Union	2	
24	FifthFourth	21A	(part of Forsyth,	1	
25	1 11 <u>11 3 11 11 1</u>	2111	see subsection (b))	•	
26	FifthFourth	21B	(part of Forsyth,	1	
27	1 11 11 1 <u>1 3 11 11 1</u>	215	see subsection (b))	•	
28	FifthFourth	21C	(part of Forsyth,	1	
29	Thu <u>r outur</u>	210	see subsection (b))	1	
30	FifthFourth	21D	(part of Forsyth,	1	
31	i iiii <u>i ouitii</u>	210	see subsection (b))	1	
32	SixthFourth	22A	Alexander, Iredell	2	
33	Sixth Fourth	22B	Davidson, Davie	2	
34	FifthFourth	23	Alleghany, Ashe,	1	
35	i iiui <u>i ourui</u>	23	Wilkes, Yadkin	1	
36	EighthFifth	24	Avery, Madison,	2	
37	Lighth Tittli	24	Mitchell,	2	
38			Watauga, Yancey		
39	Seventh Fifth	25A	Burke, Caldwell	2	
40	Seventh Fifth	25B	Catawba	$\overset{2}{2}$	
41	Seventh Fifth	26A	(part of Mecklenburg,	$\overset{2}{2}$	
42	Seventin'i I III	20A	see subsection (b))	2	
43	Seventh Fifth	26B	(part of Mecklenburg,	3	
43 44	Seventii Titti	20 D	see subsection (b))	3	
45	Seventh Fifth	26C	(part of Mecklenburg,	2	
	Sevenui riiui	20C		2	
46 47	CoventhEifth	27 /	see subsection (b))	2	
47 40	Seventh Fifth	27A	Gaston	2	
48	Seventh Fifth	27B	Cleveland, Lincoln	2	
49 50	Eighth <u>Fifth</u>	28	Buncombe	2	
50	Eighth <u>Fifth</u>	29A	McDowell,	1	
51			Rutherford		

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1	EighthFifth	29B	Henderson, Polk,	1
2			Transylvania	
3	EighthFifth	30A	Cherokee, Clay,	1
4	<u> </u>		Graham, Macon,	
5			Swain	
6	EighthFifth	30B	Haywood, Jackson	1
7	<u> </u>		,	

(b1) The qualified voters of District 4 shall elect all judges established for District 4 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.

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SECTION 1.(b) The additional judge in District 19D, as established by this section, shall take office on January 1, 2019, with an election in 2018 to be held accordingly.

SECTION 1.(c) The additional judge in District 20A, as established by this section, shall take office on January 1, 2021, with an election in 2020 to be held accordingly.

SECTION 1.(d) Except as provided in this section, this section becomes effective January 1, 2019, and elections in 2018 shall be held accordingly.

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 7A-133 reads as rewritten:

"§ 7A-133. Numbers of judges by districts; numbers of magistrates and additional seats of court, by counties.

(a) Each district court district shall have the numbers of judges as set forth in the following table:

District	Judges	County
1	5	Camden
		Chowan
		Currituck
		Dare
		Gates
		Pasquotank
		Perquimans
2	4	Martin
		Beaufort
		Tyrrell
		Hyde
		Washington
3A	5	Pitt
3B	6	Craven
		Pamlico
		Carteret
4	8	Sampson
		Duplin
		Jones
		Onslow
5	9	New Hanover
		Pender
6	4	Northampton
		Bertie
		Hertford
		Halifax

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1	7	7	Nash	
2			Edgecombe	
3			Wilson	
4	8	6	Wayne	
5	· ·	Ü	Greene	
6			Lenoir	
7	9	5	Granville	
8		S	(part of Vance	
9			see subsection (b))	
10			Franklin	
11			Person	
12	9B	2	Warren	
13)D	2	(part of Vance	
14			see subsection (b))	
15	10	19	Wake	
16	11	11	Harnett	
17	11	11	Johnston	
18			Lee	
19	10	10		
20	12 13		Cumberland	
	13	6	Bladen	
21			Brunswick	
22	1.4	7	Columbus	
23	14	7	Durham	
24	15A	4	Alamance	
25	15B	5	Orange	
26	1.51		Chatham	
27	16A	<u>64</u>	Scotland	
28			Hoke	
29			Anson	
30			Richmond	
31	16B	5	Robeson	
32	17A	4	Caswell	
33			Rockingham	
34	17B	4	Stokes	
35			Surry	
36	18	14	Guilford	
37	19A	5	Cabarrus	
38	19B	7 <u>5</u>	Montgomery	
39			Moore	
40			Randolph	
41	19C	5	Rowan	
42	<u>19D</u>	<u>4</u>	Hoke, Moore	
43	20A	5 <u>4</u> 2 <u>3</u> 1	Stanly Montgomery, Stanly	
44	20B	1	(part of Union	
45			see subsection (b))	
46	20C	2	(part of Union	
47			see subsection (b))	
48	20D	1	Union	
49	21	11	Forsyth	
50	22A	5	Alexander	
51		-	Iredell	
			- 	

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22B	6	Davidson
		Davie
23	4	Alleghany
		Ashe
		Wilkes
		Yadkin
24	4	Avery
		Madison
		Mitchell
		Watauga
		Yancey
25	9	Burke
		Caldwell
		Catawba
26	21	Mecklenburg
27A	7	Gaston
27B	6	Cleveland
		Lincoln
28	7	Buncombe
29A	3	McDowell
		Rutherford
29B	4	Henderson
		Polk
		Transylvania
30	6	Cherokee
		Clay
		Graham
		Haywood
		Jackson
		Macon
		Swain.
(b) For district	court districts of less than a wh	ole county, or with part or all of one county

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

(b5) The qualified voters of District 16A shall elect all judges established for District 16A in subsection (a) of this section, but only persons who reside in Anson County may be candidates for one of the judgeships, only persons who reside in Scotland County may be candidates for one of the judgeships, and only persons who reside in Richmond County may be candidates for the remaining judgeships. In order to implement this section the following shall apply in order to transition from at large seats to residency requirements:

- (1) In 2020, and every four years thereafter, the district court judgeship requiring a resident of Anson County shall be elected, and a district court judgeship requiring a resident of Richmond County shall be elected.
- (2) In 2022, and every four years thereafter, the district court judgeship requiring a resident of Scotland County shall be elected, and a district court judgeship requiring a resident of Richmond County shall be elected.
- (b6) The qualified voters of District 20A shall elect all judges established for District 20A in subsection (a) of this section, but only persons who reside in Montgomery County may be candidates for one of the judgeships, and only persons who reside in Montgomery or Stanly County may be candidates for the remaining judgeships.

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- (b7) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, the qualified voters of District 25 shall elect all judges established for District 25 in subsection (a) of this section, but only persons who reside in Catawba County may be candidates for five of the judgeships, and only persons who reside in Burke or Caldwell County may be candidates for the remaining judgeships. In order to implement this section the following shall apply in order to transition from at large seats to residency requirements:

 (1) Transition of seats; regular elections. For any district court judgeship that is
 - Transition of seats; regular elections. For any district court judgeship that is held by a resident of Burke or Caldwell Counties on July 1, 2018, at the next general election after July 1, 2018, that district court judgeship shall be filled only by a person who is a resident of Burke or Caldwell Counties. Until such time as three district court judgeships transition under subdivision (2) of this subsection, for any district court judgeship that is held by a resident of Catawba County on July 1, 2018, that district court judgeship shall, at the next general election after July 1, 2018, be filled only by a person who is a resident of Burke, Caldwell, or Catawba County.
 - Transition of seats; vacancies. Upon each of the first three district court judgeship vacancies occurring in District Court District 25 after July 1, 2018, due to death, resignation, removal, or retirement of a person who is a resident of Catawba County holding a judgeship on July 1, 2018, that vacancy shall be filled according to law for the remainder of the unfilled term. At the next general election held for that district court judgeship, only persons who reside in Burke or Caldwell County may be candidates for that district court judgeship. Any primary associated with that general election for that district court judgeship after the completion of the term shall also be held accordingly, in accordance with this subsection.
 - Notification to State Board. Upon each of the first three district court judgeship vacancies occurring after July 1, 2018, in District Court District 25 due to the death, resignation, removal, or retirement of a person who is a resident of Catawba County holding a judgeship on July 1, 2018, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts shall provide written notice of the vacancy to the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. During the filing period for that district court judgeship at the next general election held for that district court judgeship, the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement shall ensure that only persons who reside in Burke or Caldwell County may file as candidates for that district court judgeship in accordance this subsection.
 - Final transition. If a total of three district court judgeships have not transferred under subdivision (2) of this subsection to be eligible to be held by only persons who are residents of Burke or Caldwell Counties by January 1, 2030, a sufficient number of district court judgeships to total three district court judgeships shall be transferred to be held by only persons who are residents of Burke or Caldwell Counties on January 1, 2031, and the 2030 elections shall be held accordingly.
- **SECTION 2.(b)** The additional judge in District Court District 20A, as established by this section, shall take office on January 1, 2019, with an election in 2018 to be held accordingly. In implementing G.S. 7A-133(b6), as enacted by this section, State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement shall ensure that only residents of Montgomery County may be candidates for the additional judge in District Court District 20A in the 2018 election, and every four years thereafter.

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 7A-133(b5) and G.S. 7A-133(b6), as enacted by this section, become effective January 1, 2021, with elections in 2020 to be held accordingly.

SECTION 2.(d) Except as otherwise provided, G.S. 7A-133, as enacted by this section, becomes effective January 1, 2019.

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 7A-60 reads as rewritten:

"§ 7A-60. District attorneys and prosecutorial districts.

(a) The State shall be divided into prosecutorial districts, as shown in subsection (a1) of this section. There shall be a district attorney for each prosecutorial district, as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section who shall be a resident of the prosecutorial district for which elected. A vacancy in the office of district attorney shall be filled as provided in Article IV, Sec. 19 of the Constitution.

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(a1) (Effective January 1, 2019) The counties of the State are organized into prosecutorial districts, and each district has the counties and the number of full-time assistant district attorneys set forth in the following table:

16		9 ····	No. of Full-Time
17	Prosecutorial		Asst. District
18	District	Counties	Attorneys
19	1	Camden, Chowan, Currituck,	11
20		Dare, Gates, Pasquotank,	
21		Perquimans	
22	2	Beaufort, Hyde, Martin,	8
23		Tyrrell, Washington	
24	3	Pitt	12
25	4	Carteret, Craven, Pamlico	13
26	5	Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Sampson	19
27	6	New Hanover, Pender	19
28	7	Bertie, Halifax, Hertford,	11
29		Northampton	
30	8	Edgecombe, Nash, Wilson	19
31	9	Greene, Lenoir, Wayne	14
32	10 11	Franklin, Granville, Person	14 15
33		Vance, Warren	
34	11 <u>10</u>	Wake	42
35	12	Harnett, Lee	11
36	13	Johnston	10
37	14	Cumberland	25
38	15	Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus	14
39	16	Durham	18
40	17	Alamance	12
41	18	Orange, Chatham	10
42	19	Scotland, Hoke	7
43	20	Robeson	12
44	21	Anson, Richmond Richmond, Scotland	6 9
45	22	Caswell, Rockingham	9 8
46	23	Stokes, Surry	8
47	24	Guilford	34
48	25	Cabarrus	9
49	26 <u>37</u>	Montgomery, Randolph	10
50	27	Rowan	9
51	28 29	Hoke, Moore	5 9

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1	29 28	Montgomery, Stanly	5 6
2	30	Union	11
3	31	Forsyth	27
4	32	Alexander, Iredell	12
5	33	Davidson, Davie	12
6	34	Alleghany, Ashe, Wilkes, Yadkin	9
7	35	Avery, Madison, Mitchell,	8
8		Watauga, Yancey	
9	36	Burke, Caldwell, Catawba Caldwell	19 9
10	37 26	Mecklenburg	58
11	38	Gaston	15
12	39	Cleveland, Lincoln	12
13	40	Buncombe	14
14	41	McDowell, Rutherford	8
15	42	Henderson, Polk, Transylvania	9
16	43	Cherokee, Clay, Graham,	12
17		Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain.	
18	<u>44</u>	<u>Catawba</u>	<u>10</u>
19	"		

SECTION 3.(b) The office and term of the district attorney for Prosecutorial District 19 formerly consisting of Hoke and Scotland Counties is terminated upon the expiration of the current term, December 31, 2020. Effective January 1, 2021, District 19 formerly consisting of Hoke and Scotland Counties is reassigned as provided in this section. All open investigations and pending cases for Prosecutorial District 19 formerly consisting of Hoke and Scotland Counties shall be transferred to either District 21 or District 29, as enacted by this section. Hoke County is added to District 29, as enacted by this section, and the total number of ADAs in that district is nine. Scotland County is added to District 21, and the total number of ADAs in that district is nine.

SECTION 3.(c) The merging of Montgomery County into Prosecutorial District 28, as established by this section, becomes effective January 1, 2019.

SECTION 3.(d) All open investigations and pending cases in Montgomery County are transferred to Prosecutorial District 28, effective January 1, 2019. The total number of ADAs in District 28 is nine.

SECTION 3.(e) All open investigations and pending cases in Catawba County are transferred to Prosecutorial District 44, effective January 1, 2019. The total number of ADAs in District 44 is 10.

SECTION 4.(a) G.S. 163A-1112(a) reads as rewritten:

- "(a) Except as provided in this section, each official ballot shall contain all the following elements:
 - (1) The heading prescribed by the State Board. The heading shall include the term "Official Ballot".
 - (2) The title of each office to be voted on and the number of votes allowed in each ballot item.
 - (3) The names of the candidates as they appear on their notice of candidacy filed pursuant to G.S. 163A-972, 163A-973, 163A-974, 163A-975, 163A-976, 163A-977, and 163A-978, or on petition forms filed in accordance with G.S. 163A-1005. No title, appendage, or appellation indicating rank, status, or position shall be printed on the official ballot in connection with the candidate's name. Candidates, however, may use the title Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. Nicknames shall be permitted on an official ballot if used in the notice of candidacy or qualifying petition, but the nickname shall appear according to

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1 standards adopted by the State Board. Those standards shall allow the 2 presentation of legitimate nicknames in ways that do not mislead the voter or 3 unduly advertise the candidacy. In the case of candidates for presidential 4 elector, the official ballot shall not contain the names of the candidates for 5 elector but instead shall contain the nominees for President and Vice President 6 which the candidates for elector represent. The State Board shall establish a 7 review procedure that local boards of elections shall follow to ensure that 8 candidates' names appear on the official ballot in accordance with this 9 subdivision. 10

- Party designations in partisan ballot items. (4)
- (5) A means by which the voter may cast write-in votes, as provided in G.S. 163A-1006. No space for write-ins is required unless a write-in candidate has qualified under G.S. 163A-1006 or unless the ballot item is exempt from G.S. 163A-1006.
- (6) Instructions to voters, unless the State Board allows instructions to be placed elsewhere than on the official ballot.
- The printed title and facsimile signature of the chair of the county board of (7) elections.
- (8) The designation of vacancy sought, for any vacancy for the office of Justice or judge of the courts. The designation shall not be the name or names of any incumbent or other individual but shall be designated as determined by the State Board."

SECTION 4.(b) G.S. 163A-975 reads as rewritten:

"§ 163A-975. Notice of candidacy for certain offices to indicate vacancy.

In any primary in which there are two or more vacancies for associate justices for the Supreme Court, two or more vacancies for the Court of Appeals, two or more vacancies for superior or district court judge, or two vacancies for United States Senator from North Carolina, each candidate shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board a written statement designating the vacancy to which the candidate seeks nomination. The designation shall not be the name or names of any incumbent or other individual but shall be designated as determined by the State Board. A person seeking election for a specialized district judgeship established under G.S. 7A-147 shall, at the time of filing notice of candidacy, file with the State Board a written statement designating the specialized judgeship to which the person seeks nomination. Votes cast for a candidate shall be effective only for nomination to the vacancy for which the candidate has given notice of candidacy as provided in this section."

SECTION 4.(c) This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held on or after that date.

SECTION 5. G.S. 7A-47.3 reads as rewritten:

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

- 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, as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a), districts in that judge's judicial division.
- 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 as defined in G.S. 7A-41.1(a), and at each session all matters and proceedings arising anywhere in the county shall be heard.
- 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)."

SECTION 6. Other than the filing period, the election for the office of judge for Superior Court District 19D and District Court District 20A shall be held in accordance with Section 4 of S.L. 2017-214, as amended. Candidates seeking the office of judge for Superior Court District 19D or District Court District 20A shall file their notice of candidacy with the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement no earlier than 12:00 noon on July 9, 2018, and no later than 12:00 noon on July 13, 2018.

SECTION 7. Subsection 18B.6 of S.L. 2018-5 reads as rewritten:

"**SECTION 18B.6.** Effective January 1, 2019, G.S. 7A-41(a1) G.S. 7A-60(a1) reads as rewritten:

(a1) The counties of the State are organized into prosecutorial districts, and each district has the counties and the number of full-time assistant district attorneys set forth in the following table:

...."

SECTION 8. The Director of the Budget shall increase the budget of the Administrative Office of the Courts from the unreserved fund balance set forth in S.L. 2018-5 in an amount sufficient to cover the costs of the judgeships created by this bill. These funds are hereby appropriated.

SECTION 9. If Senate Bill 757, 2018 Regular Session, becomes law, then Section 1(c) of that act reads as rewritten:

"SECTION 1.(c) In order to implement the superior court districts as enacted by this section, in 2018 and every eight years thereafter, elections shall be conducted for Districts 5A, 5B, 26C, 26E, 26F, and 26H; in 2020 and every eight years thereafter, elections shall be conducted for District 26A; and in 2022 and every eight years thereafter, elections shall be conducted for Districts 26B, 26D, and 26G; and in 2024 and every eight years thereafter, elections shall be conducted for District 5C.Districts 5A and 5C."

SECTION 10. If Senate Bill 757, 2018 Regular Session, becomes law, the assignment of judicial divisions in G.S. 7A-41(a), as enacted by that act, shall be repealed.

SECTION 11. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.