

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL 303  
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PROPOSED HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE S303-PCS45467-SA-47

Short Title: Court/Out-of-State Atty Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 14, 2023

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES AND TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO THE  
3 LAWS GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, AS RECOMMENDED BY  
4 THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS, AND TO AMEND THE  
5 STATUTES GOVERNING THE PRACTICE OF LAW BY OUT-OF-STATE  
6 ATTORNEYS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8  
9 **CLARIFY CLERK RETENTION OF ADOPTION PETITION**

10 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 48-9-102(d) reads as rewritten:

11 "(d) All records filed in connection with an adoption, including a copy of the petition  
12 giving the date of the filing of the original petition, the original of each consent and  
13 relinquishment, additional documents filed pursuant to G.S. 48-2-305, any report to the court,  
14 any additional documents submitted and orders entered, any orders of dismissal, and a copy of  
15 the final decree, shall be sent by the clerk of superior court to the Division within 10 days after  
16 the appeal period for a decree of adoption has expired or 10 days following the final disposition  
17 of an appeal pursuant to G.S. 48-2-607(b). The original petition and final decree or order of  
18 dismissal shall be retained by the clerk."  
19

20 **REMOVE RESTRICTION ON FILING BRIEFS AND MEMORANDA**

21 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 5(d), reads as rewritten:

22 "(d) Filing. – The following papers shall be filed with the court, either before service or  
23 within five days after service:

- 24 (1) All pleadings, as defined by Rule 7(a) of these rules, subsequent to the  
25 complaint, whether such pleadings are original or amended.  
26 (2) Written motions and all notices of hearing.  
27 (3) Any other application to the court for an order that may affect the rights of or  
28 in any way commands any individual, business entity, governmental agency,  
29 association, or partnership to act or to forego action of any kind.  
30 (4) Notices of appearance.  
31 (5) Any other paper required by rule or statute to be filed.  
32 (6) Any other paper so ordered by the court.  
33 (7) All orders issued by the court.



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1 All other papers, regardless of whether these rules require them to be served upon a party,  
2 should not be filed with the court unless (i) the filing is agreed to by all parties, or (ii) the papers  
3 are submitted to the court in relation to a motion or other request for relief, or (iii) the filing is  
4 permitted by another rule or statute. ~~Briefs or memoranda provided to the court may not be filed~~  
5 ~~with the clerk of court unless ordered by the court.~~ The party taking a deposition or obtaining  
6 material through discovery is responsible for its preservation and delivery to the court if needed  
7 or so ordered."  
8

## 9 BUSINESS COURT EFILING CHANGES

10 SECTION 3.(a) Article 7 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes is amended by adding  
11 a new section to read:

### 12 "§ 1-81.2. Venue in complex business cases.

13 (a) To facilitate the effective administration in the State's statewide electronic filing  
14 system of mandatory complex business cases and those cases assigned to a business court judge,  
15 and subject to subsection (e) of this section, venue shall lie exclusively in Wake County in any  
16 action designated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina as a mandatory  
17 complex business case pursuant to G.S. 7A-45.4 or otherwise assigned to a business court judge  
18 by the Chief Justice pursuant to the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts.

19 (b) When a Notice of Designation filed pursuant to G.S. 7A-45.4(c) is filed  
20 contemporaneously with the initiation of an action, the action shall be brought in Wake County.  
21 If the Chief Justice or the Chief Business Court Judge enters an order declining to designate an  
22 action filed pursuant to this subsection as a mandatory complex business case, that order shall  
23 direct the clerk of superior court to transfer the action to the county of origin identified in the  
24 Notice of Designation.

25 (c) When a Notice of Designation filed pursuant to G.S. 7A-45.4(c) is filed in an action  
26 instituted outside of Wake County, the clerk of superior court in the county of origin shall transfer  
27 the action to Wake County after the issuance of summons in accordance with G.S. 1A-1, Rule 4.  
28 If the Chief Justice or the Chief Business Court Judge subsequently enters an order declining to  
29 designate an action filed pursuant to this subsection as a mandatory complex business case or  
30 declines to otherwise assign the matter to a business court judge pursuant to the General Rules  
31 of Practice for the Superior and District Courts, the order shall direct the clerk of superior court  
32 to transfer the action to the county of origin identified in the Notice of Designation.

33 (d) No later than five days after an action is transferred to or from Wake County pursuant  
34 to subsection (b) or (c) of this section, the Wake County Clerk of Superior Court shall serve the  
35 party that filed the Notice of Designation with a notice of transfer. The notice shall be on a form  
36 promulgated by the Administrative Office of the Courts. No later than five days after being served  
37 with the notice of transfer, the party that filed the Notice of Designation shall serve a copy of the  
38 notice of transfer on all parties in the action not served by the Wake County Clerk of Superior  
39 Court.

40 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Article or any other General Statute concerning  
41 venue, trials in mandatory complex business cases and cases assigned to a business court judge  
42 pursuant to the General Rules of Practice for Superior and District Courts shall be held in the  
43 county of origin identified in the Notice of Designation. The presiding business court judge may  
44 conduct trials outside the county of origin in any superior court or business court facility with the  
45 consent of the parties, or upon the motion of a party or the judge and an order finding that the  
46 convenience of witnesses and the ends of justice would be promoted by the change. The presiding  
47 business court judge may conduct trials remotely pursuant to G.S. 7A-49.6. The presiding  
48 business court judge may conduct pretrial proceedings outside the county of origin in any  
49 superior court or business court facility, or remotely pursuant to G.S. 7A-49.6, in the judge's  
50 discretion."

51 SECTION 3.(b) G.S. 7A-45.4 reads as rewritten:

1 "§ 7A-45.4. Designation of complex business cases.

2 ...

3 (c) A party designating an action as a mandatory complex business case shall file a Notice  
 4 of Designation in the Superior Court in which the action has been filed, shall contemporaneously  
 5 serve the notice on each opposing party or counsel and on the Special Superior Court Judge for  
 6 Complex Business Cases who is then the Chief Business Court Judge, and shall  
 7 contemporaneously send a copy of the notice by e-mail to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
 8 for approval of the designation of the action as a mandatory complex business case. action  
 9 pursuant to G.S. 1-81.2. The Notice of Designation shall, in good faith and based on information  
 10 reasonably available, succinctly state the basis of the designation and include a certificate by or  
 11 on behalf of the designating party that the civil action meets the criteria for designation as a  
 12 mandatory complex business case pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) of this section. The Notice of  
 13 Designation shall identify the county of origin, which is the county in which the matter is pending  
 14 at the time the Notice of Designation is filed or, if filed contemporaneously with the initiation of  
 15 the case, the county in which the plaintiff asserts the trial of the matter would be proper under  
 16 Article 7 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes.

17 ...

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

30 (f) Once a designation is filed under subsection (d) of this section, ~~and after preliminary~~  
 31 ~~approval by the Chief Justice,~~ a case shall be designated and administered a complex business  
 32 ~~ease. All case unless and until an order has been entered under subsection (e) of this section~~  
 33 ~~ordering that the case not be designated a mandatory complex business case. Except for execution~~  
 34 ~~proceedings pursuant to Articles 28 through 32 of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes, all~~  
 35 ~~proceedings in the action shall be before the Business Court Judge to whom it has been assigned~~  
 36 ~~unless and until an order has been entered under subsection (e) of this section ordering that the~~  
 37 ~~ease not be designated a mandatory complex business case or the Chief Justice revokes approval.~~  
 38 ~~assigned.~~ If complex business case status is revoked or denied, the action shall be treated as any  
 39 other civil action, unless it is designated as an exceptional civil case or a discretionary complex  
 40 business case pursuant to ~~Rule 2.1~~ of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District  
 41 Courts.

42 ...."

43 **SECTION 3.(c)** This section becomes effective when the North Carolina Business  
 44 Court implements the electronic filing system approved by the Director of the Administrative  
 45 Office of the Courts.

46 **TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS**

47 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 1A-1, Rule 55(b), reads as rewritten:

48 "(b) Judgment. – Judgment by default may be entered as follows:

49 (1) By the Clerk. – When the plaintiff's claim against a defendant is for a sum  
 50 certain or for a sum which can by computation be made certain, the clerk upon  
 51

1 request of the plaintiff and upon affidavit of the amount due shall enter  
 2 judgment for that amount and costs against the defendant, if the defendant has  
 3 been defaulted for failure to appear and if the defendant is not an infant or  
 4 incompetent person. A verified pleading may be used in lieu of an affidavit  
 5 when the pleading contains information sufficient to determine or compute  
 6 the sum certain.

7 In all cases wherein, pursuant to this rule, the clerk enters judgment by  
 8 default upon a claim for debt which is secured by any pledge, mortgage, deed  
 9 of trust or other contractual security in respect of which foreclosure may be  
 10 had, or upon a claim to enforce a lien for unpaid taxes or ~~assessments under~~  
 11 ~~G.S. 105-414, assessments,~~ the clerk may likewise make all further orders  
 12 required to consummate foreclosure in accordance with the procedure  
 13 provided in Article 29A of Chapter 1 of the General Statutes, entitled "Judicial  
 14 Sales."

15 ...."

16 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 7A-102(b) reads as rewritten:

17 "(b) An assistant clerk is authorized to perform all the duties and functions of the office of  
 18 clerk of superior court, and any act of an assistant clerk is entitled to the same faith and credit as  
 19 that of the clerk. A deputy clerk is authorized to certify the existence and correctness of any  
 20 record in the clerk's office, to take the proofs and examinations of the witnesses touching the  
 21 execution of a will as required by ~~G.S. 31-17, G.S. 28A-2A-6,~~ and to perform any other  
 22 ministerial act which the clerk may be authorized and empowered to do, in his own name and  
 23 without reciting the name of his principal. The clerk is responsible for the acts of his assistants  
 24 and deputies. With the consent of the clerk of superior court of each county and the consent of  
 25 the presiding judge in any proceeding, an assistant or deputy clerk is authorized to perform all  
 26 the duties and functions of the office of the clerk of superior court in another county in any  
 27 proceeding in the district or superior court that has been transferred to that county from the county  
 28 in which the assistant or deputy clerk is employed."

29 **SECTION 6.** G.S. 28A-25-6(a) reads as rewritten:

30 "(a) As an alternative to the small estate settlement procedures of this Article, any person  
 31 indebted to a decedent may satisfy such indebtedness by paying the amount of the debt to the  
 32 clerk of the superior court of the county of the domicile of the ~~decedent;~~ decedent if all of the  
 33 following conditions are met:

34 (1) ~~If no~~ No administrator has been ~~appointed, and~~ appointed.

35 (2) ~~If the~~ Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 90-210.64(d), the amount owed  
 36 by such person does not exceed ~~five thousand dollars (\$5,000), and~~ five  
 37 thousand dollars (\$5,000).

38 (3) ~~If the~~ Except as otherwise provided in G.S. 90-210.64(d), the sum tendered to  
 39 the clerk would not make the aggregate sum which has come into the clerk's  
 40 hands belonging to the decedent exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000)."

41 **SECTION 7.** G.S. 28A-26-3(b) reads as rewritten:

42 "(b) If, within 90 days after the death of the nonresident, or within 60 days after issue of  
 43 domiciliary letters, should that be a shorter period, no application for ancillary letters has been  
 44 made by a domiciliary personal representative, any person who could apply for issue of letters  
 45 had the decedent been a resident may apply for issue of ancillary letters.

46 If it is known that there is a duly qualified domiciliary personal representative, the clerk of  
 47 superior court shall send notice of such ~~application, by registered mail,~~ application to that  
 48 personal representative and to the appointing court. Such notice shall include a statement that,  
 49 within 14 days after its mailing, the domiciliary personal representative may apply for the issue  
 50 of ancillary letters with the preference specified in subsection (a) of this section; and that failure  
 51 of the domiciliary personal representative to do so will be deemed a waiver, with the result that

1 letters will be issued to another. Upon such failure, the clerk of superior court may issue ancillary  
2 letters in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of this Chapter.

3 If the applicant and the clerk of superior court have no knowledge of the existence of a  
4 domiciliary personal representative, the clerk of superior court may proceed to issue ancillary  
5 letters. Subsequently, upon it becoming known that a domiciliary personal representative has  
6 been appointed, whether such appointment occurred before or after the issue of ancillary letters,  
7 the clerk of superior court shall notify the domiciliary personal ~~representative, by registered mail,~~  
8 representative of the action taken by the clerk of superior court and the state of the ancillary  
9 administration. Such notice shall include a statement that at any time prior to approval of the  
10 ancillary personal representative's final account the domiciliary personal representative may  
11 appear in the proceedings for any purpose the domiciliary personal representative may deem  
12 advisable; and that the domiciliary personal representative may apply to be substituted as  
13 ancillary personal representative, but that such request will not be granted unless the clerk of  
14 superior court finds that such action will be for the best interests of North Carolina administration  
15 of the estate."

16 **SECTION 8.** G.S. 35A-1106 reads as rewritten:

17 **"§ 35A-1106. Contents of petition.**

18 The petition shall set forth, to the extent known, all of the following:

- 19 (1) The name, age, address, and county of residence of the respondent.
- 20 (2) The name, address, and county of residence of the petitioner, and the  
21 petitioner's interest in the proceeding.
- 22 (3) A general statement of the respondent's assets and liabilities with an estimate  
23 of the value of any property, including any compensation, insurance, pension,  
24 or allowance to which the respondent is entitled.
- 25 (4) A statement of the facts tending to show that the respondent is incompetent  
26 and the reason or reasons why the adjudication of incompetence is sought.
- 27 (4a) A statement identifying what less restrictive alternatives have been considered  
28 prior to seeking adjudication and why those less restrictive alternatives are  
29 insufficient to meet the needs of the respondent.
- 30 (5) The name, address, and county of residence of the respondent's next of kin  
31 and other persons known to have an interest in the proceeding.
- 32 (6) Facts regarding the adjudication of respondent's incompetence by a court of  
33 another state, ~~if an adjudication is sought on that basis pursuant to~~  
34 G.S. 35A-1113(1).state as defined by G.S. 35B-2."

35 **SECTION 9.** G.S. 65-93 reads as rewritten:

36 **"§ 65-93. Funds to be kept perpetually.**

37 All money placed in the office of the superior court clerk in accordance with this Part shall  
38 be held perpetually, or until such time as the balance of the trust corpus falls below one hundred  
39 dollars (\$100.00), at which time the trust shall terminate, and the clerk shall disburse the  
40 remaining ~~balance as provided in G.S. 36A-147(e).~~balance. Except as otherwise provided herein,  
41 no one shall have authority to withdraw or change the direction of the income on same."

42 **SECTION 10.** G.S. 101-2 reads as rewritten:

43 **"§ 101-2. Procedure for changing name; petition; notice.**

44 (a) A person who wishes, for good cause shown, to change his or her name must file an  
45 application before the clerk of the superior court of the county in which the person resides, after  
46 giving 10 days' notice of the application by publication ~~at the courthouse door in the area~~  
47 designated by the clerk of superior court for posting notices in the county.

48 ...

49 (d) An application to change the name of a minor child may be filed by the child's parent  
50 or parents, guardian appointed under Article 6 of Chapter 35A of the General Statutes, or  
51 guardian ad litem appointed under Rule 17 of the Rules of Civil Procedure, and this application

1 may be joined in the application for a change of name filed by the parent or parents. A change of  
2 parentage or the addition of information relating to parentage on the birth certificate of any person  
3 is governed by G.S. 130A-118. An application to change the name of a minor child ~~may shall~~  
4 not be filed without the consent of both parents if both parents are living, unless one of the  
5 following applies:

- 6 (1) A minor who has reached the age of 16 may file an application to change his  
7 or her name with the consent of the parent who has custody of the minor and  
8 has supported the minor, without the necessity of obtaining the consent of the  
9 other parent, when the clerk of court is satisfied that the other parent has  
10 abandoned the minor.
- 11 (2) A parent may file an application on behalf of the minor without the consent of  
12 the other parent if the other parent has abandoned the minor child.
- 13 (3) A parent may file an application on behalf of the minor without the consent of  
14 the other parent if the other parent has been convicted of any of the following  
15 offenses against the minor or a sibling of the minor:
  - 16 a. Felonious or misdemeanor child abuse.
  - 17 b. Taking indecent liberties with a minor in violation of G.S. 14-202.1.
  - 18 c. Rape or any other sex offense in violation of Article 7B of Chapter 14  
19 of the General Statutes.
  - 20 d. Incest in violation of G.S. 14-178.
  - 21 e. Assault, communicating a threat, or any other crime of violence.

22 For purposes of subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, abandonment may be shown by  
23 filing a copy of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction adjudicating that parent's  
24 abandonment of the minor. If a court of competent jurisdiction has not declared the minor to be  
25 an abandoned child, the clerk, on 10 days' written notice by registered or certified mail, directed  
26 to the last known address of the parent alleged to have abandoned the child, may determine  
27 whether the parent has abandoned the child. If the parent denies that the parent abandoned the  
28 child, this issue of fact shall be transferred and determined as provided in G.S. 1-301.2. If  
29 abandonment is determined, the consent of the parent is not required. Upon final determination  
30 of this issue of fact the proceeding shall be transferred back to the special proceedings docket for  
31 further action by the clerk. A parent who files an application on behalf of a minor pursuant to  
32 subdivision (3) of this subsection shall submit proof of the other parent's conviction to the clerk  
33 at the time of filing."

34 **SECTION 11.** G.S. 31-32(b) reads as rewritten:

35 "(b) The caveat shall be filed in the decedent's estate file. The clerk of superior court shall  
36 give notice of the filing by making an entry ~~upon the page of the will book~~ where the will is  
37 recorded, evidencing that the caveat has been filed and giving the date of such filing."  
38

### 39 **CONDITIONS OF PRETRIAL RELEASE**

40 **SECTION 12.(a)** G.S. 15A-533(h) reads as rewritten:

41 "(h) If a defendant is arrested for a new offense allegedly committed while the defendant  
42 was on pretrial release for another pending proceeding, the judicial official who determines the  
43 conditions of pretrial release for the new offense shall be a judge. The judge shall direct a law  
44 enforcement officer, pretrial services program, or a district attorney to provide a criminal history  
45 report and risk assessment, if available, for the defendant and shall consider the criminal history  
46 when setting conditions of pretrial release. After setting conditions of pretrial release, the judge  
47 shall return the report to the providing agency or department. No judge shall unreasonably delay  
48 the determination of conditions of pretrial release for the purpose of reviewing the defendant's  
49 criminal history report. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, a magistrate or the  
50 clerk of superior court may set the conditions of pretrial release at any time if the new offense is

1 a violation of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes, other than a violation of G.S. 20-138.1,  
2 20-138.2, 20-138.2A, 20-138.2B, 20-138.5, or 20-141.4.

3 A defendant may be retained in custody pursuant to this subsection not more than 48 hours  
4 from the time of arrest without a judge making a determination of conditions of pretrial release.  
5 If a judge has not acted pursuant to this subsection within 48 hours from the time of arrest of the  
6 defendant, the magistrate shall set conditions of pretrial release in accordance with  
7 G.S. 15A-534."

8 **SECTION 12.(b)** This section becomes effective October 1, 2024, and applies to  
9 defendants arrested on or after that date.

## 10 **SAFE BABIES COURT AUTHORIZATION**

11 **SECTION 13.** Chapter 7B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
12 Article to read:

13 "Article 5B.

14 "Safe Babies Court.

### 15 **"§ 7B-535. General provisions for safe babies court.**

16 (a) Purpose. – The purpose of this Article is to establish safe babies court to improve the  
17 long-term well-being of parents, children, and families involved with the department of social  
18 services and the juvenile court by providing them with trauma-informed support and services and  
19 to achieve timely permanence, reduce generational trauma, and eliminate maltreatment.

20 (b) Referral. – The Administrative Office of the Courts shall set the criteria and referral  
21 process for a juvenile court matter to enroll into a safe babies court.

22 (c) Limitations. – Nothing contained in this Article shall confer a right or an expectation  
23 of a right of participation in safe babies court to a party involved in an abuse, neglect, or  
24 dependency proceeding. A party's participation in safe babies court is voluntary.

25 (d) Permanency and Hearings. – Nothing contained in this Article shall alter any  
26 requirements or limit the court's authority to conduct hearings under this Subchapter.

### 27 **"§ 7B-536. Safe babies court records and information.**

28 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

29 (1) AOC Director. – The Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

30 (2) Coordinators. – Judicial branch staff assigned to facilitate safe babies court by  
31 coordinating family team meetings with participants and service providers,  
32 setting regular judicial status conferences for safe babies court, documenting  
33 information related to safe babies court and its participants, maintaining data  
34 and records to demonstrate program outcomes, administration of safe babies  
35 court, data analysis, and other related duties.

36 (3) De-identified record. – A record with all of the following types of information  
37 omitted, removed, or redacted:

38 a. The names, addresses, dates of birth, and employer name and address  
39 of any parties to the juvenile action, including any juvenile alleged to  
40 be within the jurisdiction of the court.

41 b. The names and addresses of service providers for any member of the  
42 family or the juvenile's placement provider.

43 c. The names and addresses of the juvenile placement.

44 d. Identifying information as defined in subdivisions (1) through (9) and  
45 (11) through (14) of G.S. 14-113.20(b).

46 (4) Participant. – A party to a juvenile proceeding who is participating in safe  
47 babies court.

48 (5) Party. – As determined by G.S. 7B-401.1.

49 (6) Record. – All recorded information, data, and documentary material,  
50 regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by safe babies  
51

- 1 court coordinators that is not filed in the juvenile court record in the custody  
 2 of the clerk of superior court.
- 3 (7) Safe babies court. – The innovative court program implementing a community  
 4 engagement and systems change initiative focused on improving how the  
 5 courts, department of social services, and related child-serving organizations  
 6 work together to improve and expedite services for young families with at  
 7 least one child who is no more than 3 years of age involved in juvenile actions  
 8 alleging abuse, neglect, or dependency.
- 9 (b) Records Custodian. – The AOC Director shall be the legal custodian of safe babies  
 10 court records. Safe babies court coordinators may have access to and use of safe babies court  
 11 records for purposes of performing their job duties.
- 12 (c) Not Public Record. – Safe babies court records are not public records as defined by  
 13 G.S. 132-1. Safe babies court records may only be disclosed as follows:
- 14 (1) The AOC Director, in the Director's sole discretion, may authorize the  
 15 disclosure and redisclosure of de-identified safe babies court records without  
 16 an order of the court.
- 17 (2) Upon a written motion in the juvenile proceeding by any party requesting safe  
 18 babies court records related to the juvenile proceeding and notice to the other  
 19 parties and the AOC Director pursuant to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 5, the AOC Director  
 20 shall provide copies of the requested records in-camera to the court. The court  
 21 shall conduct an in-camera review and hold a hearing. The court may order  
 22 disclosure of the safe babies court records to any party upon a showing of  
 23 good cause.
- 24 (d) Coordinators Privilege. – Safe baby coordinators shall not be competent to testify in  
 25 the juvenile proceeding. Any communications, information, documents, or other materials made  
 26 or received in the course of performing job duties related to safe babies court shall be privileged  
 27 except that there is no privilege for communications made in furtherance of a crime or fraud, or  
 28 for matters that require mandatory reporting. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as  
 29 permitting an individual to obtain immunity from prosecution for criminal conduct or as excusing  
 30 an individual from the reporting requirements of Article 3 of this Chapter, Article 39 of Chapter  
 31 14 of the General Statutes, G.S. 108A-102, or G.S. 110-105.4.
- 32 (e) Guardian Ad Litem Information. – The Office of Guardian ad Litem Services and any  
 33 appointed guardian ad litem may share information at safe babies court meetings as it deems in  
 34 the best interests of the juvenile."

## 35 SUPREME COURT SESSIONS

36 **SECTION 14.(a)** Notwithstanding G.S. 7A-10(a), the Supreme Court may, by rule,  
 37 hold sessions in any location across the State.

38 **SECTION 14.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and expires  
 39 December 31, 2026.

## 40 INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT PROCEDURES

41 **SECTION 15.** G.S. 122C-54 reads as rewritten:

42 **"§ 122C-54. Exceptions; abuse reports and court proceedings.**

43 ...

44 (d) ~~Any~~ Except as otherwise provided in this section, any individual seeking confidential  
 45 information contained in the court files or the court records of a proceeding made pursuant to  
 46 Article 5 of this Chapter may file a written motion in the cause setting out why the information  
 47 is needed. A district court judge may issue an order to disclose the confidential information  
 48 sought if he finds the order is appropriate under the circumstances and if he finds that it is in the  
 49  
 50



1 best interest of the individual admitted or committed or of the public to have the information  
2 disclosed.

3 Counsel for the respondent and counsel for the State in the commitment hearing may receive  
4 access to the court file without filing a motion or obtaining a court order. A judge presiding over  
5 a criminal case that initiated the Article 5 proceeding may have access to the file without filing a  
6 motion.

7 ...

8 (d3) The following persons may obtain a court file number of an involuntary commitment  
9 proceeding upon request to the clerk's office:

10 (1) A commitment examiner and their administrative support staff for the purpose  
11 of filing subsequent documentation into a court file.

12 (2) A person desiring to petition pursuant to G.S. 14-409.42 for the purpose of  
13 providing complete information in the petition.

14 ...."

15 **SECTION 16.** G.S. 122C-261 reads as rewritten:

16 "**§ 122C-261. Affidavit and petition before clerk or magistrate when immediate**  
17 **hospitalization is not necessary; custody order.**

18 ...

19 (b) If the clerk or magistrate finds reasonable grounds to believe that the facts alleged in  
20 the affidavit are true and that the respondent probably has a mental illness and is either (i)  
21 dangerous to self, as defined in G.S. 122C-3(11)a., or dangerous to others, as defined in  
22 G.S. 122C-3(11)b., or (ii) in need of treatment in order to prevent further disability or  
23 deterioration that would predictably result in dangerousness, the clerk or magistrate shall issue  
24 an order to a law enforcement officer or any other designated person under ~~G.S. 122C-251(g)~~  
25 G.S. 122C-251 to take the respondent into custody for examination by a commitment examiner.  
26 If the clerk or magistrate finds that, in addition to probably having a mental illness, the respondent  
27 also probably has an intellectual disability, the clerk or magistrate shall contact the area authority  
28 before issuing a custody order and the area authority shall designate the facility to which the  
29 respondent is to be taken for examination by a commitment examiner. The clerk or magistrate  
30 shall provide the petitioner and the respondent, if present, with specific information regarding  
31 the next steps that will occur for the respondent.

32 ...

33 (d1) If the affiant is a commitment examiner filing a petition and affidavit for an  
34 involuntary commitment in a county that has implemented an electronic filing system approved  
35 by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, the same provisions of subsection (d)  
36 of this section apply except that (i) the commitment examiner or their designee shall file the  
37 affidavit and petition, as well as any other supporting documentation required by law, through  
38 the electronic filing system, and (ii) the original affidavit and original custody order ~~is~~ are not  
39 required to be mailed to the clerk or magistrate. In such counties, commitment examiners shall  
40 also file any subsequent documentation and notifications prescribed by statute to the clerk of  
41 superior court through the electronic filing system.

42 ...."

43 **SECTION 17.** G.S. 122C-281(d) reads as rewritten:

44 "(d) If the affiant is a commitment examiner who has examined the respondent, he or she  
45 may execute the affidavit before any official authorized to administer oaths. The commitment  
46 examiner is not required to appear before the clerk or magistrate for this purpose. The  
47 commitment examiner's examination shall comply with the requirements of the initial  
48 examination as provided in G.S. 122C-283(c). The affiant shall file the affidavit and examination  
49 findings with the clerk of court in the manner described in ~~G.S. 122C-261(d)(1)-~~  
50 G.S. 122C-261(d)(1) for affiants filing in counties that have not implemented an electronic filing  
51 system approved by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts and

1 G.S. 122C-261(d1) for affiants filing in counties that have implemented an electronic filing  
2 system approved by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. If the commitment  
3 examiner recommends commitment and the clerk or magistrate finds probable cause to believe  
4 that the respondent meets the criteria for commitment, the clerk or magistrate shall issue an order  
5 to a law enforcement officer to take the respondent into custody for transportation to a 24-hour  
6 facility, or, if the respondent is released pending hearing, as described in G.S. 122C-283(d)(1),  
7 order that a hearing be held as provided in G.S. 122C-284(a). If a physician or eligible  
8 psychologist executes an affidavit for commitment of a respondent, a second qualified  
9 professional shall perform the examination required by G.S. 122C-285. Any person or entity who  
10 or which has been designated in compliance with ~~G.S. 122C-251(g)~~ G.S. 122C-251 shall be  
11 permitted to complete all or part of the duties of a law enforcement officer, in accord with the  
12 designation."

13 **SECTION 18.** G.S. 14-409.43(a) reads as rewritten:

14 "(a) Excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, not later than 48 hours after receiving  
15 notice of any of the following judicial determinations or findings, the clerk of superior court in  
16 the county where the determination or finding was made shall work through the Administrative  
17 Office of the Courts to cause a record of the determination or finding to be transmitted to the  
18 National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS):

- 19 (1) A determination that an individual shall be involuntarily committed to a  
20 facility for inpatient mental health treatment upon a finding that the individual  
21 is mentally ill and a danger to self or others.
- 22 (2) A determination that an individual shall be involuntarily committed to a  
23 facility for outpatient mental health treatment upon a finding that the  
24 individual is mentally ill and, based on the individual's treatment history, in  
25 need of treatment in order to prevent further disability or deterioration that  
26 would predictably result in a danger to self or others.
- 27 (3) A determination that an individual shall be involuntarily committed to a  
28 facility for substance abuse treatment upon a finding that the individual is a  
29 substance abuser and a danger to self or others.
- 30 (4) A finding that an individual is not guilty by reason of insanity.
- 31 (5) A finding that an individual is mentally incompetent to proceed to criminal  
32 trial.
- 33 (6) A finding that an individual lacks the capacity to manage the individual's own  
34 affairs due to marked subnormal intelligence or mental illness, incompetency,  
35 condition, or disease.
- 36 (7) A determination to grant a petition to an individual for the removal of  
37 disabilities pursuant to G.S. 14-409.42 or any applicable federal law.

38 The 48-hour period for transmitting a record of a judicial determination or finding to the  
39 NICS under subsection (a) of this section begins upon receipt by the clerk of a copy of the judicial  
40 determination or finding. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall adopt rules to require  
41 clerks of court to transmit information to the NICS in a uniform manner.

42 The petitioner and commitment examiner in a proceeding under Article 5 of Chapter 122C  
43 of the General Statutes shall provide a social security number and drivers license number, if  
44 known, of the respondent for the court to enter into NICS upon a judicial determination. The  
45 court may collect the social security number and drivers license number on the petition initiating  
46 the proceeding or on documents filed by the commitment examiner. The petitioner in a  
47 proceeding under Article 1 of Chapter 35A of the General Statutes shall provide a drivers license  
48 number, if known, of the respondent for the court to enter into NICS upon a judicial determination  
49 of incompetence. The court may collect the drivers license number on the petition initiating the  
50 proceeding and may place the drivers license number on the court's order upon a judicial  
51 determination of incompetence."

**LAW ENFORCEMENT QUALIFICATION FOR MAGISTRATE NOMINATION****SECTION 19.** G.S. 7A-171.2(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) To be eligible for nomination as a magistrate, an individual (i) shall have at least eight years' experience as the clerk of superior court in a county of this State ~~or~~ or as a law enforcement officer in this State, (ii) shall have a four-year degree from an accredited senior institution of higher ~~education~~ education, or (iii) shall have a two-year associate degree and four years of work experience in a related field, including teaching, social services, law enforcement, arbitration or mediation, the court system, or counseling. The Administrative Officer of the Courts may determine whether the work experience is sufficiently related to the duties of the office of magistrate for the purposes of this subsection. In determining whether an individual's work experience is in a related field, the Administrative Officer of the Courts shall consider the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities for the office of magistrate.

The eligibility requirements prescribed by this subsection do not apply to individuals holding the office of magistrate on June 30, 1994, and do not apply to individuals who have been nominated by June 30, 1994, but who have not been appointed or taken the oath of office by that date."

**CLERK BOND REQUIREMENT CONFORMING CHANGES****SECTION 20.** G.S. 1-305 reads as rewritten:**"§ 1-305. Clerk to issue, in six weeks; ~~penalty; limitations on issuance.~~**

(a) Subject to the provisions of G.S. 1A-1 (Rule 62) and subsection (b) below, the clerk of superior court shall issue executions on all unsatisfied judgments entered in the clerk's court, which are in full force and effect, upon the request of any party or person entitled thereto and upon payment of the necessary fees; provided, however, that the clerks of the superior court shall issue executions on all judgments entered in their respective courts on forfeiture of bonds in criminal cases within six weeks of the entry of the judgment, without any request or any advance payment of fees. Every clerk who fails to comply with the requirements of this section is liable to be amerced in the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for the benefit of the party aggrieved, under the same rules that are provided by law for amercing ~~sheriffs, and is further liable to the party injured by suit upon the clerk's bond.~~ sheriffs.

(b) The clerk may not issue an execution unless

- (1) The judgment debtor's exemptions have been designated, or
- (2) The judgment debtor has waived his exemptions as provided in G.S. 1C-1601(c), or
- (3) The clerk determines that the exemptions are inapplicable to the particular claim as authorized by G.S. 1C-1603(a)(3)."

**SECTION 21.** G.S. 65-95 reads as rewritten:**"§ 65-95. ~~Clerk's bond; substitution~~ Substitution of bank or trust company as trustee.**

~~The official bond of the clerk of the superior court shall be liable for all such sums as shall be paid over to the clerk in accordance with the provisions of this Part.~~ In lieu of the provisions of this section, the clerk may appoint any bank or trust company authorized to do business in this State as trustee for the funds authorized to be paid into his office by virtue of this Part; provided, that no bank or trust company shall be appointed as such trustee unless such bank or trust company is authorized and licensed to act as fiduciary under the laws of this State.

Before any clerk shall turn over such funds to the trustee so appointed, the clerk shall require that the trustee so named qualify before the clerk as such trustee in the same way and manner and to the same extent as guardians are by law required to so qualify. After such trustee has qualified as herein provided, all such funds coming into the clerk's hands may be invested by the trustee only in the securities set out in G.S. 7A-112 and the income therefrom invested for the purposes and in the manner heretofore set out in this Part. All trustees appointed under the provisions of

1 this Part shall render and file in the office of the clerk of the superior court all reports that are  
2 now required by law of guardians."

3 **SECTION 22.** G.S. 35A-1238 is repealed.

4 **SECTION 23.** G.S. 45-21.31(e) is repealed.

#### 5 6 **JUDICIAL LICENSE PLATE**

7 **SECTION 24.** G.S. 20-79.4(b)(2) reads as rewritten:

8 "(2) Administrative Officer of the Courts. – Issuable to the Director of the  
9 Administrative Office of the Courts. The plate shall bear the phrase  
10 "J-20". "J-99"."  
11

#### 12 **OUT-OF-STATE ATTORNEYS**

13 **SECTION 25.(a)** G.S. 84-4 reads as rewritten:

14 "**§ 84-4. Persons other than members of State Bar prohibited from practicing law.**

15 (a) Except as otherwise permitted by law, it shall be unlawful for any person or  
16 association of persons, except active members of the Bar of the State of North Carolina admitted  
17 and licensed to practice as attorneys-at-law, to appear as attorney or counselor at law in any  
18 action or proceeding before any judicial body, including the North Carolina Industrial  
19 Commission, or the Utilities Commission; to maintain, conduct, or defend the same, except in  
20 his own behalf as a party thereto; or, by word, sign, letter, or advertisement, to hold out himself,  
21 or themselves, as competent or qualified to give legal advice or counsel, or to prepare legal  
22 documents, or as being engaged in advising or counseling in law or acting as attorney or  
23 counselor-at-law, or in furnishing the services of a lawyer or lawyers; and it shall be unlawful  
24 for any person or association of persons except active members of the Bar, for or without a fee  
25 or consideration, to give legal advice or counsel, perform for or furnish to another legal services,  
26 or to prepare directly or through another for another person, firm or corporation, any will or  
27 testamentary disposition, or instrument of trust, or to organize corporations or prepare for another  
28 person, firm or corporation, any other legal document. Provided, that nothing herein shall prohibit  
29 any person from drawing a will for another in an emergency wherein the imminence of death  
30 leaves insufficient time to have the same drawn and its execution supervised by a licensed  
31 attorney-at-law. The provisions of this section shall be in addition to and not in lieu of any other  
32 provisions of this Chapter. Provided, however, this ~~section~~-subsection shall not apply to  
33 corporations authorized to practice law under the provisions of Chapter 55B of the General  
34 Statutes of North Carolina.

35 (b) It shall be unlawful for a lawyer not admitted to the Bar of the State of North Carolina  
36 to advertise to provide legal services in North Carolina unless the lawyer is authorized to provide  
37 the advertised legal services in North Carolina under State or federal law. For purposes of this  
38 subsection, it shall be no defense that the lawyer is eligible for admission pursuant to  
39 G.S. 84-4.1."

40 **SECTION 25.(b)** This section becomes effective December 1, 2024, and applies to  
41 offenses committed, and causes of action arising, on or after that date.

42 **SECTION 26.(a)** G.S. 84-4.1 reads as rewritten:

43 "**§ 84-4.1. Limited practice of out-of-state attorneys.**

44 (a) Definitions. – For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

45 (1) Foreign attorney. – An attorney licensed in another state or jurisdiction, and  
46 regularly admitted to practice in the courts of record of and in good standing  
47 in that state or jurisdiction, but not licensed in North Carolina.

48 (2) Law firm. – As that term is defined in G.S. 1-642.

49 (b) Admission. – Any attorney ~~domiciled in another state, and regularly admitted to~~  
50 practice in the courts of record of and in good standing in that state, foreign attorney, having been  
51 retained as attorney for a party to any civil or criminal legal proceeding pending in the General

1 Court of Justice of North Carolina, the North Carolina Utilities Commission, the North Carolina  
2 Industrial Commission, the Office of Administrative Hearings of North Carolina, or any  
3 administrative agency, may, on motion to the relevant forum, be admitted to practice in that  
4 forum for the sole purpose of appearing for a client in the proceeding. The motion required under  
5 ~~this section subsection shall be signed by the attorney and shall contain or be accompanied by: be~~  
6 on a form approved by the Supreme Court, shall be signed by the foreign attorney and the North  
7 Carolina licensed attorney of record identified in subdivision (5) of this subsection, and shall  
8 contain the following information:

- 9 (1) The foreign attorney's full name, bar membership number, date of admission,  
10 and status as a practicing attorney in another state, proof of good standing for  
11 each state or jurisdiction to which the foreign attorney has been admitted to  
12 practice.
- 13 (1a) The foreign attorney's mailing address, phone number, and email address to  
14 be used as the attorney's contact information of record with the court, pursuant  
15 to G.S. 1A-1, Rule 5.
- 16 (2) A statement, signed by ~~the client,~~ each client for whom the foreign attorney  
17 seeks admission, setting forth the client's name and address and declaring that  
18 the client has retained the foreign attorney to represent the client in the  
19 proceeding. In the case of a corporate entity client, the statement shall include  
20 the name and position of the person signing the statement and an affirmation  
21 that the signer has proper authority to sign the statement on behalf of the entity  
22 client.
- 23 (3) A statement that unless permitted to withdraw sooner by order of the court,  
24 the foreign attorney will continue to represent the client in the proceeding until  
25 its final determination, and that with reference to all matters incident to the  
26 proceeding, the foreign attorney agrees to be subject to the orders and  
27 amenable to the disciplinary action and the civil jurisdiction of the General  
28 Court of Justice and the North Carolina State Bar in all respects as if the  
29 foreign attorney were a regularly admitted and licensed member of the Bar of  
30 North Carolina in good standing.
- 31 (4) ~~A statement that the state in which the attorney is regularly admitted to~~  
32 ~~practice grants like privileges to members of the Bar of North Carolina in good~~  
33 ~~standing. A statement that the foreign attorney will report to the North Carolina~~  
34 ~~Department of Revenue any income earned from the matter that is taxable~~  
35 ~~under North Carolina law.~~
- 36 (5) A statement to the effect that the foreign attorney has associated and is  
37 personally appearing in the proceeding, with an attorney who is a resident of  
38 this State, has agreed to be responsible for filing a registration statement with  
39 the North Carolina State Bar, and is duly and legally admitted to practice in  
40 the General Court of Justice of North Carolina, upon whom service may be  
41 had in all matters connected with the legal proceedings, or any disciplinary  
42 matter, with the same effect as if personally made on the foreign attorney  
43 within this State.
- 44 (6) A statement accurately disclosing a record of all ~~that the foreign~~ foreign attorney's  
45 disciplinary history. Discipline shall include (i) public discipline by any court  
46 or lawyer regulatory organization, and (ii) revocation of any pro hac vice  
47 admission.
- 48 (7) A fee in the amount of two hundred twenty-five dollars (\$225.00) submitted  
49 and made payable to one of the following: (i) for judicial proceedings, the  
50 presiding clerk of court and (ii) for administrative proceedings, the presiding  
51 administrative agency. The clerk of court or administrative agency shall: (i)

1 remit two hundred dollars (\$200.00) of the fee collected to the State Treasurer  
 2 for support of the General Court of Justice, and (ii) transmit twenty-five  
 3 dollars (\$25.00) of the fee collected to the North Carolina State Bar to regulate  
 4 the practice of out-of-state attorneys as provided in this section.

5 (c) Limitations. – Pursuant to this section, no foreign attorney may:

6 (1) Be admitted in more than three unrelated cases in any 12-month period.

7 (2) Be admitted in more than three active unrelated cases at any one time.

8 (3) Be admitted if the foreign attorney's law firm employs one or more foreign  
 9 attorneys that (i) have been admitted pursuant to this section in three or more  
 10 unrelated cases in the preceding 12-month period or (ii) are currently admitted  
 11 pursuant to this section in three or more active unrelated cases.

12 (d) Court Discretion. – Compliance with the foregoing requirements does not deprive the  
 13 court of the discretionary power to allow or reject the application.

14 (e) Advertisements. – Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit foreign  
 15 attorneys to advertise to provide legal services in North Carolina that the foreign attorney is not  
 16 authorized to provide."

17 **SECTION 26.(b)** This section becomes effective October 1, 2024, and applies to  
 18 representation in civil proceedings filed and criminal offenses charged on or after that date.

19 **SECTION 27.(a)** G.S. 84-28 reads as rewritten:

20 "**§ 84-28. Discipline and disbarment.**

21 (a) Any attorney admitted to practice law in this ~~State~~State, or any attorney offering or  
 22 providing legal services in this State, is subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Council  
 23 under such rules and procedures as the Council shall adopt as provided in G.S. 84-23.

24 (b) The following acts or omissions by a member of the North Carolina State ~~Bar~~Bar,  
 25 any attorney admitted for limited practice under G.S. 84-4.1, or any attorney offering or  
 26 providing legal services in North Carolina, individually or in concert with any other person or  
 27 persons, shall constitute misconduct and shall be grounds for discipline whether the act or  
 28 omission occurred in the course of an attorney-client relationship or otherwise:

29 (1) Conviction of, or a tender and acceptance of a plea of guilty or no contest to,  
 30 a criminal offense showing professional unfitness;

31 (2) The violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct adopted and promulgated  
 32 by the Council in effect at the time of the act;

33 (3) Knowing misrepresentation of any facts or circumstances surrounding any  
 34 complaint, allegation or charge of misconduct; failure to answer any formal  
 35 inquiry or complaint issued by or in the name of the North Carolina State Bar  
 36 in any disciplinary matter; or contempt of the Council or any committee of the  
 37 North Carolina State Bar.

38 ...."

39 **SECTION 27.(b)** This section becomes effective October 1, 2024.

#### 40 CHANGE 2022-47 EFFECTIVE DATE

41 **SECTION 28.** Subsection (b) of Section 1 of S.L. 2022-47, as amended by Section  
 42 14.5 of S.L. 2023-103, reads as rewritten:

43 "**SECTION 1.(b)** This section becomes effective August 1, 2022, and expires ~~July 1,~~  
 44 2024.July 1, 2025."

#### 45 EFFECTIVE DATE

46 **SECTION 29.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
 47 law.  
 48  
 49