



Josh Stein, Governor

*State of North
Carolina*

GOVERNOR JOSH STEIN OBJECTIONS AND VETO MESSAGE:

***House Bill 377: AN ACT TO ENACT CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE LAWS
RELATED TO THE NORTH CAROLINA COURT SYSTEM AND TO MAKE TECHNICAL
CORRECTIONS TO ESTATE PLANNING STATUTES.***

This bill would have a chilling effect on judicial independence by giving the Chief Justice authority to suspend trial judges without pay, a power no other Chief Justice in the country has. North Carolina voters elect the vast majority of our judges in our state, and removing judges from their posts should first and foremost be determined by the people. Just as the respective leadership in each legislative chamber does not have the power to suspend duly elected legislators, and just as the Governor does not have the power to suspend an elected member of the Council of State, the Chief Justice should not have the power to suspend a trial judge elected by the people. Judges should be able to do their jobs without fear that the Chief Justice may deprive them of their livelihood. The small role the bill reserves for the Judicial Standards Commission is cold comfort, given that the Chief Justice and legislative leadership control nearly all of its appointments.

For thirteen years, the General Assembly has repeatedly played politics with the judiciary, including taking all four of the nonpartisan State Bar's appointments to the Judicial Standards Commission for itself. It needs to stop politicizing our courts. An independent judiciary is critical to protecting the rule of law and the rights of all North Carolinians. I will always stand up for the people of North Carolina.

Therefore, I veto the bill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Stein", written over a horizontal line.

Josh Stein
Governor

RECEIVED FROM GOVERNOR

Date: 8-17-26

Time: 12:32pm

Signed: mfoote

EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 30. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 6th day of August, 2026.

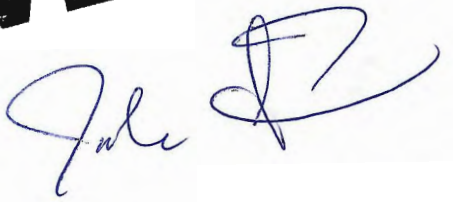


Rachel Hunt
President of the Senate



Mike Schietzelt
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

VETO



Josh Stein
Governor

Approved _____ .m. this _____ day of _____, 2026

RECEIVED FROM GOVERNOR

Date: 8-17-26

Time: 12:32pm

Signed: m. Pooler