

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1993**

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**HOUSE BILL 1063**

Short Title: Economic and Family Justice Funds.

(Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives Fitch; Baddour, Barnhill, Braswell, D. Brown, Burton, Colton, Cummings, Cunningham, Daughtry, Dockham, Flaherty, Gamble, Gardner, Green, Griffin, H. Hunter, Jenkins, Kennedy, Kinney, Kuczmariski, Lemmond, Mavretic, McAllister, Michaux, B. Miller, Moore, Oldham, Richardson, Smith, Spears, Sutton, Wainwright, C. Wilson, and Wright.

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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April 19, 1993

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED**

**AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR ECONOMIC AND FAMILY JUSTICE.**

Whereas, the General Assembly has placed priority on economic development for low-income and minority communities and measures to increase opportunities for families with children in the past, and the need continues for legislative assistance to efforts to improve depressed communities and to assist low-income families with children to achieve self-sufficiency and economic opportunity; and

Whereas, a necessary component of an agenda for change for low-income communities and families is access to justice through the availability of legal assistance, community legal education, and support for volunteer efforts of private attorneys; and

Whereas, families in target areas of State-supported housing development and job creation efforts need education about their rights and advice and representation about credit, benefits, and the housing transaction to participate in these programs; low-income families intended to benefit from State and federal efforts to provide access to health care, adequate food and nutrition, and meaningful education opportunities also need education about their rights and advice and representation to take advantage of these programs; and

Whereas, the General Assembly enacted the Access to Civil Justice Act in 1989, as Article 37A of the General Statutes, to provide access to legal representation

1 for indigent persons in certain civil matters; and that statute includes as permissible  
2 activities representation of families with children with a wide range of legal problems  
3 including efforts to gain skills and means to gain employment at a decent wage and  
4 reduce the welfare rolls, to obtain safe and sanitary housing, to secure pension and  
5 social security benefits, to obtain access to health care, to obtain food and nutrition, and  
6 efforts to secure transportation; and

7         Whereas, that statute provides for education of low-income persons regarding  
8 their rights and duties under law and for legal representation of such persons in matters  
9 which enable them to take advantage of the myriad of programs and services the State  
10 provides for the benefit of their communities and families; and

11         Whereas, the funds provided by the General Assembly to the Access to Civil  
12 Justice Act in each of the last four years, and proposed in the continuation budget for  
13 this biennium, along with all other funds for civil representation of low-income people,  
14 provide services to less than twenty percent (20%) of the persons in need; and

15         Whereas, approximately 13,000 North Carolinians have been represented in  
16 such matters as child support, family abuse, farm foreclosures, housing and job creation,  
17 social security disability, and other benefits with funds provided under the Access to  
18 Civil Justice Act; and

19         Whereas, there has been no increase in the State appropriation to this act  
20 since its inception and increased funding would enable more North Carolinians to  
21 realize the promise of stable communities, economic opportunity, and family security;

22 Now, therefore,

23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

24         Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North Carolina  
25 State Bar, through the Administrative Office of the Courts, the sum of one million  
26 dollars (\$1,000,000) for the 1992-93 fiscal year and one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for  
27 the 1993-94 fiscal year to be allocated pursuant to Article 37A of Chapter 7A of the  
28 General Statutes.

29         Sec. 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1993.