

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 854*

Short Title: Venue/Municipalities in Multiple Districts. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Vaughan.

Referred to: Judiciary II.

March 25, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE VENUE RULES AND THE AUTHORITY OF MAGISTRATES
3 FOR MUNICIPALITIES LYING IN FOUR OR MORE COUNTIES, EACH OF WHICH
4 IS IN A DIFFERENT JUDICIAL DISTRICT.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 7A-199(c) reads as rewritten:

7 "(c) A district court judge sitting at a seat of court described in this section may, in
8 criminal cases, conduct preliminary hearings and try misdemeanors arising within the corporate
9 limits of the municipality plus the territory embraced within a distance of one mile in all
10 directions therefrom.

11 If the corporate limits of the municipality extend into two or more counties, each of which
12 is in a separate district court district, a district court judge assigned to sit at the seat of court has
13 the same authority over criminal cases arising in the municipality and the territory embraced
14 within a distance of one mile in all directions that he would have if the corporate limits of the
15 municipality were solely located in a single district court district. Judges assigned to sit in such
16 a municipality shall be assigned by the chief district court judge serving the district in which a
17 majority of the voters of the municipality reside, but offenses arising in ~~the~~ a portion of the
18 municipality in which ~~the~~ a minority of the voters reside shall not be disposed of in the
19 municipality unless the chief district court judge for that district consents in writing to the
20 disposition of criminal cases in the municipality. However, if the corporate limits of the
21 municipality extend into four or more counties, each of which is in a separate district court
22 district, offenses arising in a portion of the municipality in which a minority of the voters
23 resides shall be disposed of in the municipality without obtaining the consent of the chief
24 district court judge for the district in which the offense occurred."

25 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 7A-293 reads as rewritten:

26 "**§ 7A-293. Special authority of a magistrate assigned to a municipality located in more**
27 **than one county of a district court district.**

28 A magistrate assigned to an incorporated municipality, the boundaries of which lie in more
29 than one county of a district court district, may, in criminal matters, exercise the powers
30 granted by G.S. 7A-273 as if the corporate limits plus the territory embraced within a distance
31 of one mile in all directions therefrom were located wholly within the magistrate's county of
32 residence. Appeals from a magistrate exercising the authority granted by this section shall be
33 taken in the district court in the county in which the offense was committed. A magistrate
34 exercising the special authority granted by this section shall transmit all records, reports, and
35 monies collected to the clerk of the superior court of the county in which the offense was
36 committed. In addition, if a magistrate is assigned to an incorporated municipality, the
37 boundaries of which lie in two or more district court districts, the magistrate may exercise the



1 powers described in this section as if both counties were in the same district court district, if the
2 clerks of superior court and the chief district court judges serving both districts in which the
3 municipality is located agree in writing that the exercise of this special authority would
4 promote the administration of justice in the municipality and in both districts. However, if a
5 magistrate is assigned to an incorporated municipality, the boundaries of which lie in four or
6 more counties, each of which is in a separate district court district, the magistrate may exercise
7 the powers described in this section as if all the counties were in the same district court district,
8 without the necessity of such an agreement between the clerks and judges of the affected
9 counties, and the records, reports, and monies collected in connection with the exercise of that
10 authority shall be transmitted to the clerk of the superior court district for which the
11 municipality is a seat of court."

12 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 15A-131(c) reads as rewritten:

13 "(c) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, venue for probable cause hearings
14 and trial proceedings in cases within the original jurisdiction of the superior court lies in the
15 county where the charged offense occurred. ~~If~~ Except as otherwise provided in this subsection,
16 if the alleged offense is committed within the corporate limits of a municipality which is the
17 seat of superior court and is located in more than one county, venue lies in the superior court
18 which sits within that municipality, but upon timely objection of the defendant or the district
19 attorney in the county in which the alleged offense occurred the case must be transferred to the
20 county in which the alleged offense occurred. However, if the alleged offense is committed
21 within the corporate limits of a municipality that extends into four or more counties, each of
22 which is in a separate superior court district, offenses committed within the corporate limits of
23 the municipality but in a superior court district other than the one for which the municipality is
24 the seat of superior court shall be disposed of in the municipality with no allowance for
25 objections by the defendant or the district attorney."

26 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2009, and applies to
27 offenses committed on or after that date.