

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011**

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**HOUSE BILL 900**

Short Title: Courts Commission Study. (Public)

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Sponsors: Representative Haire (Primary Sponsor).  
For a complete list of Sponsors, see Bill Information on the NCGA Web Site.

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Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

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May 5, 2011

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO DIRECT THE NORTH CAROLINA COURTS COMMISSION TO STUDY  
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

Whereas, an amendment to the North Carolina Constitution was approved by the voters in November 1965 authorizing the creation of an intermediate appellate court to relieve pressure on the Supreme Court by sharing the appellate caseload, and the 1967 General Assembly enacted legislation creating the Court of Appeals; and

Whereas, the constitutional changes and legislation of the 1960s created the State's current multilevel General Court of Justice consisting of two trial divisions, the District Court Division and the Superior Court Division, and an Appellate Division consisting of two levels, the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court; and

Whereas, the basic operating structure of the General Court of Justice has remained largely unchanged since the creation of the General Court of Justice in the 1960s; and

Whereas, during that time the population of North Carolina has increased dramatically, as have the numbers of cases filed in the State's courts, the number of felonies charged each year, and the amounts spent by the State on the defense of indigent criminals; and

Whereas, while efforts such as the enactment of structured sentencing, the creation of specialty courts, and the increased use of mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution have allowed the General Court of Justice to absorb this increased workload to some extent, the pressures of a growing caseload continue to test the resources of the courts in North Carolina; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** The North Carolina Courts Commission shall study the current state of the General Court of Justice, focusing on the sentencing laws, workloads, case backlogs, and other issues relevant to the effective and efficient administration of justice and determine whether the current organization and operation of the State court system is in need of revision or adjustment in order to better serve the interests of justice. In conducting its study, the Courts Commission shall consult with the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, the National Center for State Courts, and any other agencies or entities the Commission deems appropriate to the conduct of its study. The Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the 2013 General Assembly.

**SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Judicial Department the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to fund the study provided for in this act.

**SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2011.

