



News Release

The 26th Judicial District of North Carolina

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Chief Judges Oppose Elimination of Trial Court Administrators

Mecklenburg County, NC – The Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Chief District Court Judge and many others are speaking out in opposition to proposed cuts to a key leadership position in Mecklenburg County and thirteen other judicial districts throughout North Carolina. Last week, the chairs of the Justice and Public Safety (JPS) Appropriation Subcommittee released their proposed budget for the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) and other justice agencies. Drug Treatment Courts and Family Courts, two programs originally targeted for elimination, were given a reprieve and the recommendation now provides for their funding in FY11-12 with a continuation review in FY12-13. Custody Mediation was also a target for elimination, but has now been completely dropped from the list. Unfortunately, in the process of dropping the above noted items from the list of cuts, a new one was added: Elimination of Trial Court Administrator (TCA) positions.

Eliminating the TCA positions would take the court system back to the early 1970s. The creation of TCAs in NC and throughout the country was part of a movement towards professionalization of the courts and the need for trained business managers to bring the system into an era of modernization and increased efficiency. The volume and complexity of the caseload were growing and there was recognition that the field of court administration was needed to bring about improvement. The volume and complexity has only increased over the last forty (40) years and the need for professional management of systems and scarce resources has never been greater. Eliminating the TCA positions throws everything up for grabs. It basically says that the accountability these positions bring is no longer needed. It also works counter to the objective of streamlining government and finding ways to work smarter. TCAs are the people who make those things happen.

Mecklenburg's Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Richard D. Boner strongly opposes the cuts, stating, "Elimination of our Trial Court Administrator's office will return our court system in Mecklenburg County to the Dark Ages."

Chief District Court Judge Lisa C. Bell also opposes the cuts, stating, "We have made great gains in the efficiency of court services offered to the citizens of this county. Unfortunately, those gains will be lost along with the TCA position. The disposition of cases will be unquestionably slow. And, it is likely that this will result in greater jail populations, higher dismissal rates by the District Attorney, more criminals not being held accountable, and reduced public safety."

Mecklenburg's Trial Court Administrator, Todd Nuccio, a veteran in court administration with over twenty years experience, stated, "We are appreciative of the fact that the JPS Chairs took the time to listen to the various constituent groups and reconsidered the direction they were headed regarding the elimination of Drug Treatment Courts, Family Courts and Custody Mediation. We

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now hope that they will again be willing to receive information on the impact of eliminating TCA positions and will quickly act to remove that recommendation before the committee votes again this week. Hopefully, there will some recognition that the system does not run itself and that someone is needed to steer the ship.”

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