

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 656

Short Title: Split Distr Ct/Defender Distr 43 into 43A/43B. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Clampitt.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Judiciary 1, if favorable, Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 2, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO SPLIT DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT 43 INTO DISTRICT COURT DISTRICTS
43A AND 43B, TO SPLIT DEFENDER DISTRICT 43 INTO DEFENDER DISTRICTS
43A AND 43B, AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) G.S. 7A-133 reads as rewritten:

"§ 7A-133. Numbers of judges by districts; numbers of magistrates and additional seats of court, by counties.

(a) Each district court district shall have the numbers of judges as set forth in the following table:

District	Judges	County
...		
43 43A	7 4	Cherokee Clay Graham Haywood Jackson Macon Swain Swain
43B	4	Haywood Jackson."

SECTION 1.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts the sum of two hundred fifty-three thousand one dollars (\$253,001) in recurring funds and ten thousand three hundred seventy-six dollars (\$10,376) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to hire one full-time district court judge pursuant to Section 1(a) of this act.

SECTION 1.(c) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts the sum of seven thousand four hundred twenty-one dollars (\$7,421) in recurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be added to the salary of the district court judge selected as chief district court judge of District 43B created under Section 1(a) of this act.

SECTION 1.(d) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts the sum of seventy-one thousand nine hundred thirty-two dollars (\$71,932) in recurring funds and three thousand four hundred thirty-six dollars (\$3,436) in nonrecurring



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funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to hire one full-time judicial assistant to serve District Court District 43B.

SECTION 1.(e) Subsection (a) of this section becomes effective January 1, 2027, and elections held in 2026 shall be held accordingly. The remainder of this section becomes effective July 1, 2026.

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 7A-498.7(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) The following counties of the State are organized into the defender districts listed below, and in each of those defender districts an office of public defender is established:

Defender District

Counties

...

~~43~~43A

Cherokee, Clay, Graham,
~~Haywood, Jackson, Macon,~~
Swain

43B

Haywood, Jackson

After notice to, and consultation with, the affected district bar, senior resident superior court judge, and chief district court judge, the Commission on Indigent Defense Services may recommend to the General Assembly that a district or regional public defender office be established. A legislative act is required in order to establish a new office or to abolish an existing office."

SECTION 2.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Indigent Defense Services, the sum of two hundred twenty-eight thousand four hundred sixty-one dollars (\$228,461) in recurring funds and four thousand eight hundred ninety-five dollars (\$4,895) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to hire one full-time chief public defender to serve Defender District 43B.

SECTION 2.(c) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Indigent Defense Services, the sum of four hundred twenty-four thousand four hundred eighty-eight dollars (\$424,488) in recurring funds and fourteen thousand six hundred eighty-five dollars (\$14,685) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be used to hire three full-time assistant public defenders to serve Defender District 43B.

SECTION 2.(d) This section becomes effective July 1, 2026.

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.