

# NC BAR ASSOCIATION

## GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

### UPDATE

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#### SENATE BUDGET RELEASED

The Senate's budget adjustments for the 2006-2007 fiscal year include \$373 million in expansion funds for the judicial branch, which is an increase of \$30 million ([click here for link](#)). Highlights of the budget are detailed below:

#### TECHNOLOGY

Appropriates \$7.5 million for critical technology projects with the AOC, including new initiatives related to e-filing.

#### DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Provides additional funding for 90 Assistant District Attorneys and 9 Victim Witness Legal Assistants. The ADA's will be allocated based on the workload formula adopted by the Conference of District Attorneys. In addition, \$3 million was allocated for the Open File Discovery Project, to register the articles of evidence, track their use and verify that the articles have been disclosed to the appropriate parties as required by law.

#### TRIAL COURTS

Provides funding for 16 new District Court judges, as well as additional deputy clerks and 6 new magistrates.

#### SELF-SERVE CENTERS

Appropriates funds for a pilot implementation of self-serve centers in four courthouses in the state. AOC will select the four sites, which will provide access to legal forms and other resources for pro se litigants.

#### DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAMS

##### **Child Custody Mediation Program**

Appropriates funding to expand the Custody Mediation Program into the remaining Judicial Districts.

##### **Dispute Settlement Centers**

Appropriates funding to restore past year cuts at 24 dispute settlement centers across the state.

#### OAH FUNDING

The Senate's recommendations provide \$3 million for operational support and 2 additional Administrative Law judges to manage increased filings.

#### OTHER BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Increase in the portion of the General Court of Justice court fee used for legal services programs from \$1.05 to \$2.05
- 5% salary increases for judicial branch
- \$750,000 additional funding for the North Carolina Judicial College
- Funding for Business Court site in Wake County
- Additional funding for statewide Drug Treatment Court operations and three Drug Treatment case coordinator positions
- Funding to make the Wake Family Court permanent

For more information about the Senate's budget, please contact the [Office of Governmental Affairs](#).