

NC BAR ASSOCIATION

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

UPDATE

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVES BUDGET; GOVERNOR SIGNS INTO LAW

On July 16, 2008, Governor Mike Easley signed the \$21.4 billion budget bill into law ([click here for link](#)). The budget includes a 2.75% salary increase for judicial branch officials, assistant district attorneys and public defenders. Also included in the budget is \$857 million in debt capacity over the next four years for university buildings and prison construction. There were no new taxes and very few cuts in existing taxes included in this year's legislative short session. Highlights of the budget are detailed below:

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Provides additional funding for 32 new District Attorneys and 3 new Assistant District Attorneys. Restores funding for the Conference of District Attorneys.

TRIAL COURTS

Appropriates funding for 3 new District Court judges, as well as 4 additional deputy clerks, 6 new magistrates and 3 new Guardian ad Litem staff positions as well as judicial support staff positions. Restores funding for the Clerks of Superior Court Conference.

OFFICE OF INDIGENT DEFENSE

Provides \$2 million in funding for expansion of public defender services and \$25,000 in funding to implement a pilot program to evaluate an alternate scheduling system in the District and Superior Courts.

OTHER BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Establishes court facility fee to upgrade, maintain and operate the judicial and county courthouse phone systems.
- Provides funding for legal assistance to low income home owners in cases involving predatory mortgage lending, mortgage broker and loan services abuses and foreclosure defense.
- Sentencing & Policy Advisory Commission Staff
- Innocence Inquiry Commission Staff

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

ABA

ABA Washington Letter

The *ABA Washington Letter*, provided by the ABA Office of Governmental Affairs, provides up-to-date information to the legal profession on federal legislative issues. Please click the link below to access the July issue.

[July 2008 Washington Letter](#)

INSIDE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2009 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly will convene on January 28, 2009. Please [click here](#) for a schedule of meetings being held during the interim.

REMINDER!

Legislative proposals for the 2009 Session of the General Assembly are due to the OGA by October 3.