

# Chief Justice Newby Announces Pretrial Release Task Force



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# Chief Justice Paul Newby Announces Pretrial Release Task Force

***To ensure the practices and procedures of pretrial release within our court system comply with the law and adequately protect the public***

RALEIGH – Disturbing recent events call for a comprehensive statewide review of pretrial release and the pretrial release practices and policies employed in each of the jurisdictions within the state. To conduct that review, Chief Justice Paul Newby launched the [Chief Justice's Pretrial Release Task Force](#) today.

"North Carolinians have entrusted the Judicial Branch with administering justice without favor, denial, or delay for the benefit of all North Carolina's citizens," said Chief Justice Newby. "In administering justice, public safety is of the utmost concern. When our citizens feel safe, they thrive physically, relationally, economically, and spiritually. It is my priority to ensure that we, as a Judicial Branch, execute our responsibilities well and strive continuously to improve our efforts to administer justice."

The Task Force will be co-chaired by The Honorable Phil Berger, Jr., Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and The Honorable R. Stuart Albright, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge. "I agree with the Chief Justice that the practices and procedures of pretrial release should comply with the law and adequately protect the public," said Justice Berger. "I believe this review is both necessary and urgent. This Task Force is genuinely committed to seek reform where necessary."

To accomplish its mission, the Pretrial Release Task Force will:

- survey and assess our current practice and procedure regarding pretrial release among the various North Carolina jurisdictions, including any local policies;
- evaluate whether these practices and procedures comply with N.C.G.S. § 15A-534 and other relevant statutory provisions;
- compare the current statutory framework for pretrial release decision making with the twin priorities of public safety and the protection of victims and consider whether the current framework adequately protects the public;
- evaluate whether these practices and procedures adequately balance the need for judicial discretion with the need for consistency in decision making;
- produce a guide that outlines best practices for pretrial release to assist Judicial Branch stakeholders; and
- if needed, make recommendations for legislative consideration to reform the practice and procedure of pretrial release.

Task Force members are appointed by Chief Justice Newby. In addition to Justice Berger and Judge Albright, representatives from the Judicial Branch and other relevant stakeholder groups, including law enforcement and victims of crime, will serve as valued members of the task force. The Pretrial Release Task Force will work efficiently to provide an assessment and recommendations as soon as possible, but no later than one year from now.

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## **About North Carolina Judicial Branch**

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. The 7,600 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties. The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2023–24](#) was \$750.7M, 90.9% of which is used to pay salaries and 9.1% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives 2.53% of the overall State budget.

## **About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts**

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

## **Media Contact**

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