

**Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly, State of North Dakota, begun in the  
Capitol in the City of Bismarck, on Monday, the sixth day of January,  
one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven**

SENATE BILL NO. 2002  
(Appropriations Committee)  
(At the request of the Supreme Court)

AN ACT to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the judicial branch; to provide an exemption from the provisions of section 54-44.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code; to declare legislative intent; to amend and reenact sections 11-10-02, 11-17-04, 27-02-02, 27-05-03, 27-11-17, 27-11-22, and 27-12-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the consolidation of the positions of register of deeds and clerk of district court, fees charged by the clerk of district court, salaries of supreme and district court judges, and attorney license fees; and to provide an effective date.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION.** The funds provided in this section, or so much of the funds as may be necessary, are hereby appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise appropriated, and from special funds derived from federal funds and other income, to the judicial branch for the purpose of defraying the expenses of its various divisions, for the biennium beginning July 1, 1997, and ending June 30, 1999, as follows:

Subdivision 1.

SUPREME COURT

Salaries and wages		\$ 4,644,087
Operating expenses		1,490,790
Equipment		132,700
Judges retirement		337,405
Dispute resolution options		20,000
Total all funds		<u>\$ 6,624,982</u>
Less estimated income		8,963
Total general fund appropriation		<u>\$ 6,616,019</u>

Subdivision 2.

DISTRICT COURTS

Salaries and wages		\$21,518,136
Operating expenses		7,906,299
Clerk of court consolidation funding		100,000
Equipment		654,954
Judges retirement		959,232
Total all funds		<u>\$31,138,621</u>
Less estimated income		384,089
Total general fund appropriation		<u>\$30,754,532</u>

Subdivision 3.

JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSION AND DISCIPLINARY BOARD

Judicial conduct commission and disciplinary board		\$ 460,000
Total all funds		<u>\$ 460,000</u>
Less estimated income		225,000
Total general fund appropriation		<u>\$ 235,000</u>
Grand total general fund appropriation		\$37,605,551
Grand total special funds appropriation		\$ 618,052
Grand total all funds appropriation		<u>\$38,223,603</u>

**SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.** There is hereby appropriated any funds received by the supreme court, district courts, and judicial conduct commission and disciplinary board, not otherwise appropriated, pursuant to federal acts and private gifts, grants, and donations for the purpose as designated in the federal acts or private gifts, grants, and donations for the period beginning July 1, 1997, and ending June 30, 1999.

**SECTION 3. TRANSFERS.** The director of the office of management and budget and the state treasurer shall make such transfers of funds between line items of appropriation for the judicial branch of government as may be requested by the supreme court upon a finding by the court that the nature of the duties of the court and its staff requires the transfers to carry on properly the functions of the judicial branch of government.

**SECTION 4. EXEMPTION.** The supreme court equipment appropriation contained in section 1 of chapter 24 of the 1993 Session Laws is not subject to section 54-44.1-11, and \$75,565 of the unexpended funds from this appropriation are available for the purchase of a photocopier during the biennium beginning July 1, 1997, and ending June 30, 1999.

**SECTION 5. COURT AUTOMATION RESTRICTED.** The supreme court and the district courts may not require any county to spend county funds on computer equipment relating to the automation of the court system.

**SECTION 6. LEGISLATIVE INTENT.** It is the intent of the fifty-fifth legislative assembly that counties use the provisions of chapters 11-10.2, 11-10.3, and 54-40.3 to combine or share the services of clerks of district court and that the judicial branch budget for the 1999-2001 biennium and future bienniums include funding necessary to efficiently fund administration of the district courts.

**SECTION 7. AMENDMENT.** Section 11-10-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**11-10-02. Number and election of county officers.** Each organized county, unless it has adopted one of the optional forms of county government provided by the code or has combined or separated the functions of county offices or redesignated offices as elective or appointive pursuant to chapter 11-10.2 or 11-10.3, must have the following officers:

1. One county auditor.
2. One register of deeds ~~in counties having a population of more than six thousand.~~
3. One clerk of the district court, except as otherwise provided by this section.
4. One state's attorney.
5. One sheriff.
6. One county treasurer.
7. One coroner.
8. ~~Repealed by S.L. 1989, ch. 137, § 10, effective January 1, 1993.~~
9. A board of county commissioners consisting of three or five members as provided in this title.

In counties having a population of six thousand or less, the register of deeds shall perform the functions of the clerk of the district court ~~must be the register of deeds~~, unless the board of county commissioners adopts a resolution separating the offices no less than thirty days before petitions for nomination to county offices may first be filed for the primary election. In a county having a population of more than six thousand, the offices of clerk of district court and register of deeds may be combined into an office of register of deeds if the board of county commissioners, following consultation with the supreme court, adopts a resolution combining the offices no less than thirty days before petitions for nominations to county offices may first be filed for the primary election. For a county ~~which~~ that has

properly initiated the option ~~and it is funded by the legislative assembly~~ pursuant to section 11-17-11, ~~and the office of the clerk of court is funded by the legislative assembly,~~ the board of county commissioners may provide for the ~~functions of the register of deeds' services in any appropriate manner~~ deeds, which may include functions of the clerk of district court and other functions as determined by the board of county commissioners. Counties having a population of six thousand or less and exercising the option provided in section 11-17-11 may contract with the state court administrator for the provision of shared funding for register of deeds' services. The required officers must be chosen by the qualified electors of the respective counties at the general election in each even-numbered year, except the register of deeds, county auditor, treasurer, sheriff, state's attorney, and clerk of the district court, who must be chosen in 1966 and every four years thereafter, the members of the board of county commissioners, who must be chosen in the manner prescribed in section 11-11-02, and the county coroner, who must be chosen in the manner prescribed in section 11-19.1-03. The clerk of district court elected pursuant to this section is not subject to election in any future general election that occurs after the start of the state biennium after the county has properly initiated the option and the legislative assembly has provided appropriations pursuant to section 11-17-11.

**SECTION 8. AMENDMENT.** Section 11-17-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**11-17-04. Fees to be charged by the clerk of the district court.**

1. The clerk of the district court shall charge and collect the following fees in civil cases:
  - a. For filing a case for decision that is not a small claims action, eighty dollars.
    - (1) ~~Ten~~ Fifteen dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the civil legal services fund. Any fees collected under this paragraph which exceed \$400,000 in any biennium must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.
    - (2) For the filing of a petition for dissolution of marriage, annulment, or separation from bed and board, fifty dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the displaced homemaker account created by section 14-06.1-14.
    - (3) For all other filings, ~~fifty~~ forty-five dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.
  - b. For filing an answer to a case that is not a small claims action, fifty dollars. The clerk shall deposit this fee with the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund in the state treasury.
  - c. For filing a small claims action in district court, ten dollars.
  - d. For filing any matter authorized to be filed in the office of the clerk of court other than under subdivision a, b, or c, five dollars.
  - e. For preparing, certifying, issuing, or transmitting any document, five dollars; or such lesser fee as may be set by a schedule to be promulgated by the state court administrator.
  - f. For filing a motion or an answer to a motion to modify an order for alimony, property division, child support, or child custody, thirty dollars. The clerk shall deposit this fee with the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund of the state treasury.
2. Section 27-01-07 applies to fees charged under this section. The clerk of court may not charge or collect any fee, prescribed by this or any other section, from the state or an agency thereof or from a political subdivision or agency thereof.

**SECTION 9. AMENDMENT.** Section 11-17-04 of the North Dakota Century Code as amended by section 8 of this Act is amended and reenacted as follows:

**11-17-04. Fees to be charged by the clerk of the district court.**

1. The clerk of the district court shall charge and collect the following fees in civil cases:
  - a. For filing a case for decision that is not a small claims action, eighty dollars.
    - (1) Fifteen dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the civil legal services fund. Any fees collected under this paragraph which exceed \$400,000 in any biennium must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.
    - (2) For the filing of a petition for dissolution of marriage, annulment, or separation from bed and board, fifty dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the displaced homemaker account created by section 14-06.1-14 and fifteen dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.
    - (3) For all other filings, ~~forty-five~~ sixty-five dollars of this fee must be paid by the clerk of court to the state treasurer for deposit in the state general fund.
  - b. For filing an answer to a case that is not a small claims action, fifty dollars. The clerk shall deposit this fee with the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund in the state treasury.
  - c. For filing a small claims action in district court, ten dollars.
  - d. For filing any matter authorized to be filed in the office of the clerk of court other than under subdivision a, b, or c, five dollars.
  - e. For preparing, certifying, issuing, or transmitting any document, five dollars; or such lesser fee as may be set by a schedule to be promulgated by the state court administrator.
  - f. For filing a motion or an answer to a motion to modify an order for alimony, property division, child support, or child custody, thirty dollars. The clerk shall deposit this fee with the state treasurer for deposit in the general fund of the state treasury.
2. Section 27-01-07 applies to fees charged under this section. The clerk of court may not charge or collect any fee, prescribed by this or any other section, from the state or an agency thereof or from a political subdivision or agency thereof.

**SECTION 10. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-02-02 of the 1995 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**27-02-02. Salaries of judges of supreme court.** The annual salary of each judge of the supreme court is ~~seventy-five~~ seventy-nine thousand ~~nine~~ seven hundred ~~thirty-six~~ seventy-one dollars through June 30, ~~1996~~ 1998, and ~~seventy-seven~~ eighty-two thousand ~~four~~ one hundred ~~forty-eight~~ sixty-four dollars thereafter. The chief justice of the supreme court is entitled to receive an additional two thousand ~~one~~ two hundred ~~thirty-six~~ fifty dollars per annum through June 30, ~~1996~~ 1998, and two thousand ~~one~~ three hundred ~~eighty-four~~ eighteen dollars per annum thereafter.

**SECTION 11. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-05-03 of the 1995 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**27-05-03. Salaries and expenses of district judges.** The annual salary of each district judge is ~~seventy~~ seventy-three thousand ~~sixty-eight~~ six hundred ~~sixteen~~ sixteen dollars through June 30, ~~1996~~ 1998, and ~~seventy-one~~ seventy-five thousand ~~four~~ eight hundred ~~seventy-two~~ twenty-four dollars thereafter. Each district judge is entitled to travel expenses including mileage and subsistence while engaged in

the discharge of official duties outside the ~~county~~ city in which the judge's chambers are located. The salary and expenses are payable monthly in the manner provided by law. A presiding judge of a judicial district is entitled to receive an additional one thousand ~~six~~ seven hundred ~~fifty-six~~ forty-three dollars per annum, through June 30, ~~1996~~ 1998, and one thousand ~~six~~ seven hundred ~~ninety-two~~ ninety-five dollars thereafter.

**SECTION 12. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-11-17 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**27-11-17. Fee payable by all applicants for admission to bar - Disposition of fees.** The state bar board ~~shall~~ is entitled to receive a fee to be determined ~~from time to time~~ by the state bar board with the approval of the supreme court of an amount not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars from each applicant for admission to the bar of this state who submits to examination by the state bar board and ~~shall receive~~ a fee to be determined ~~from time to time~~ by the state bar board with the approval of the supreme court of an amount not to exceed ~~two~~ four hundred dollars from each applicant for admission to the bar of this state who seeks admission upon motion in accordance with state law or supreme court rule. All ~~such~~ fees received must be deposited and disbursed in accordance with section 54-44-12.

**SECTION 13. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-11-22 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**27-11-22. Annual licenses to practice law and to serve on certain courts - Requirement - Issuance - Fees.** Every person who has an unrevoked certificate of admission to the bar of this state and who desires to engage in the practice of law, or who is to serve as a judge of a court of record, shall secure an annual license from the state bar board on or before January first of each year. The secretary-treasurer of the board shall issue the license upon compliance with the rules adopted or approved by the supreme court to assure the professional competence of attorneys, and upon payment of a fee established by the state bar association at its annual meeting, by a majority vote of its members in attendance at the meeting, not to exceed ~~two~~ four hundred ~~fifty~~ dollars. The license is valid for the calendar year for which it is issued. Issuance of an annual license to practice law may not be conditioned upon payment of any surcharge, assessment, or fee in excess of the maximum fee established by this section. This section does not prohibit imposition of a reasonable fee for filing and processing reports of compliance with continuing education requirements.

**SECTION 14. AMENDMENT.** Section 27-12-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**27-12-04. Moneys payable from state bar fund to state bar association.** The state bar association of North Dakota, out of the state bar fund, ~~annually shall~~ must receive eighty, for operation of the lawyer discipline system, fifty dollars of each license fee beginning January 1, 1998, and seventy-five dollars of each license fee beginning January 1, 1999. Eighty percent of the remaining amount of the annual license fees paid by licensed members; must be paid to the state bar association for the purpose of ~~paying for the printing administering and distribution of the annual report and proceedings of said~~ operating the association and for the payment of other necessary expenses of the association. ~~Such sum~~ These sums must be paid quarterly to the association by the state bar board upon vouchers drawn in accordance with section 54-44-12.

**SECTION 15. EFFECTIVE DATE.** Section 9 of this Act becomes effective on April 1, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2002.

Senate Vote:    Yeas    48        Nays    0        Absent    1

House Vote:    Yeas    81        Nays    12       Absent    4

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997,  
at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of State