



NORTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF
DEFENSE ATTORNEYS

June 3, 2013

The Honorable Thom Tillis
Speaker, NC House of Representatives
16 W. Jones Street, Room 2304
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

RE: Judicial Branch Budget Cuts – Court Reporters

Dear Speaker Tillis:

The undersigned are the Executive Committee of the North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys (NCADA). We are also attorneys who regularly defend the interests of businesses and individuals across our State. We write to urge you and your colleagues to reject the provision of the current Senate budget bill that would reduce by 50%, or by a total of 52 positions, the number of court reporters employed by our court system. The relevant budget provision is Section I, Item 69 of the current bill.

North Carolina's business community counts on the courts for the efficient resolution of disputes. This community, and our members as its representatives in the courts, depends on court reporters to ensure and control the accuracy of the Court record at each stage of what are often complex and extended legal proceedings, involving multiple appearances before our courts. With the elimination of these critical positions, delays will be inevitable, the costs of litigation will necessarily increase for the parties involved, and justice for all will be sacrificed.

While a balanced budget is a requirement of our State's Constitution, North Carolina's judicial branch has experienced a steady decline in funding in recent budget cycles. Adequate funding is not only critical to maintaining our judicial system, but also in keeping the respect of the citizens of North Carolina for our system of justice. It is also essential for the fair enforcement of laws and adjudication of differences. The loss of 50% of our state court reporters will be to diminish the quality of justice dispensed for all of North Carolina's citizens.

We are aware that some advocate the use of outsourced (contract) court reporters or automated recording technologies, or both, as an adequate and less costly alternative to court reporting through personnel employed by and under the supervision of the Administrative Office of the Courts. We believe that these alternatives are inferior to a reliable system of experienced, loyal personnel who are available when and where needed and who will reliably produce a complete and accurate record of what transpires in our courts.

On behalf of the members of the North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys, our clients, and the citizens of North Carolina, we request that you and your colleagues remove from the current budget bill its provision reducing funding for court reporters.

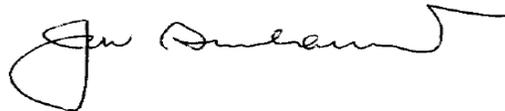
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Thank you for your time and attention to this request. We appreciate your time and attention to this matter, and your service to our State and its citizens, and if we can be of any assistance to you on this matter, please let us know.

Respectfully,



Christopher G. Smith, President
Smith Anderson, LLP



Jonathan A. Berkelhammer, President-Elect
Smith Moore Leatherwood, LLP



Edward F. Hennessey, IV, Executive Vice President
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cc: Governor Pat McCrory
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Members of the NCADA Board of Directors