



## **Summary of Justice Mark Martin’s comprehensive plan to strengthen our justice system:**

### **1. Apply Innovation to Strengthen Our Courts**

- Establish a study commission similar to the “Commission on the Future of Justice and the Courts in North Carolina” (also known as the “Medlin Commission”) and the “Committee on Improving and Expediting the Administration of Justice in North Carolina” (also known as the “Bell Commission”) in order to evaluate the operation of the court system and make recommendations to the General Assembly.
- Renew the Chief Justice’s Commission on the North Carolina Business Court with a view towards expanding the business court.
- Calendar more civil appeals for full briefing and argument at the Supreme Court.
- Establish office of central staff at the Supreme Court, similar to the office already operating at the Court of Appeals, to enable justices to consider more civil appeals, issue more written opinions, and provide appropriate guidance to legal system stakeholders and the public-at-large.

### **2. Pursue Adequate and Sustainable Funding**

- Establish the Chief Justice’s Multidisciplinary Advisory Commission on Funding our Courts to devise adequate and sustainable funding strategies for our justice system.
- Collaborate with the National Center for State Courts to develop consensus performance measures for court system administration in order to encourage optimal efficiency of public resources.
- Maintain periodic briefing schedule with legislative leaders in order to promote bilateral consensus on critical funding needs.

### **3. Incorporate Improved Use of Technology**

- Implement e-filing systems in all North Carolina courts as soon as practicable.
- Revise the appellate and trial court rules of procedure to eliminate paper filing requirements whenever possible.
- Enhance openness and transparency of court operations by making justice system filings available online.

**4. Promote Civics Education**

- Promote adoption of mandatory comprehensive civics education for all North Carolina students.
- Encourage judicial outreach into North Carolina schools through coordination with curriculum administrators and adoption of safe harbor procedures for participating public servants.
- Enhance public understanding of role of courts and status as co-equal branch of government.

**5. Improve Justice System Mental Health Resources for Individuals and Families**

- Encourage public-private partnerships to cultivate justice system mental health resources in North Carolina.
- Empower individuals and families proactively to address substance abuse issues.
- Evaluate establishment of mental health courts in the General Court of Justice.

**6. Strengthen the Rule of Law**

- Adopt best practices after comprehensive review in order to ensure equal access to justice for all persons.
- Promote justice system administrative structures that are user-friendly to all segments of the community.
- Facilitate the organization of periodic conferences to instruct secondary and post-secondary students on the multidisciplinary importance of the Rule of Law.
- Support law day activities in order to promote awareness of the Rule of Law and its importance to the preservation of our constitutional rights and responsibilities.

**7. Promote Institutional Transparency and Accountability**

- Improve judicial branch websites in order to facilitate better access to public record materials.
- Develop administrative structures to detect possible conflicts of interest and associated rules of procedure to promote timely and transparent resolution in the public interest.
- Increase information available to the public through issuance of an improved annual report on the judiciary.