

News Roundup

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Chief Justice Mark Martin delivered the 2017 State of the Judiciary Address at the North Carolina Bar Association's annual meeting over the weekend. A video of the address is available on [YouTube](#). In his remarks, Chief Justice Martin called on the General Assembly to let North Carolinians vote on whether to change the state constitution so that judges are selected using a merit-selection system. The Asheville Citizen-Times has a report about the proposal [here](#). Keep reading for more news.

Prison Review. A few weeks back, the [News Roundup](#) noted a series of articles from the Charlotte Observer about corruption and abuse in North Carolina prisons. This week the Observer [reported](#) that the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety is launching an inquiry into the issues detailed in the articles.

Judicial Redistricting. Last week the News Roundup noted that a judicial redistricting bill was under consideration by the General Assembly, and that the bill came as something of a surprise to some stakeholders in the judicial system. [WRAL says](#) that the bill has been put on hold for the time being but may be considered again in a future legislative redistricting session.

Domestic Violence Murder. Late last week the General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 600](#), legislation that would create a rebuttable presumption that a murder is a "willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing" – and thus is first degree murder – in cases where the victim and the perpetrator have a domestic relationship and where the perpetrator previously has been convicted of certain offenses involving the victim. The legislation is referred to as "[Britny's Law](#)," in memory of Britny Jordan Puryear, a Fuquay-Varina woman who was killed by her boyfriend in 2014.

Former District Attorneys Indicted. The Greensboro News & Record [reports](#) that former district attorneys Craig Blitzer and Wallace Bradsher were indicted this week on misdemeanor charges arising from their [alleged scheme](#) to hire each other's wives for state jobs. Earlier news reports relied upon by the News Roundup indicated that the scheme involved neither woman actually performing their jobs. It appears that this was inaccurate – current reports indicate that Pamela Bradsher did in fact perform her job, but that Cindy Blitzer took full-time nursing classes while also purporting to work full time at her state job.

Waiving Fines and Costs. A provision in the [budget bill](#) passed by the General Assembly last week prohibits a court from remitting or waiving any court fines or costs without first providing notice and an opportunity to be heard to every government entity directly affected by the decision. The notice must be made by first-class mail. WRAL has a report about the change in procedure [here](#).

Missing Persons. The [Greensboro News & Record](#) says that there's a missing persons problem in Guilford County. Who's missing, you ask? Apparently, a considerable portion of the people summoned for jury duty.