



Popp and PJCs

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Categories : [Sentencing](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Tagged as : [PJC](#)

Date : May 22, 2009

Editor's note: Today's post discusses a recent case about the unique-to-North-Carolina phenomenon of Prayer for Judgment Continued, or PJC. For a terrific earlier post about PJCs -- it's the single most popular post in the history of this blog -- see Jamie Markham's discussion, [here](#).

Like Jamie, I get a lot of questions about PJCs. One common question is: What's okay to include in a PJC? The question is important because a PJC is converted into a judgment if it includes conditions that amount to punishment. When that happens, no further punishment may be imposed for the crime. Earlier this week, the North Carolina Court of Appeals decided [State v. Popp](#), further clarifying the types of conditions that amount to punishment. *Popp* didn't break new ground but it did add a few things to the list of impermissible PJC conditions. The rules are as follows:

The following terms do not convert a PJC into a judgment:

- Costs
- Requirements to obey the law

By contrast, the following terms or conditions constitute punishment and convert a PJC into a judgment:

- Fine
- Imprisonment
- Restitution
- Continue psychiatric treatment
- Abide by a curfew
- Complete high school
- Enroll in an institution of higher learning or join the armed forces
- Cooperate with random drug testing
- Perform community service
- Remain employed
- Write a letter of apology