# The Constitution of North Carolina

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preamble</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article I, Declaration of Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article II, Legislative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article III, Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article IV, Judicial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article V, Finance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article VI, Suffrage and Eligibility to Vote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article VII, Local Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article VIII, Corporations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article IX, Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article X, Homesteads and Exemptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article XI, Punishments, Corrections, and Charities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article XII, Military Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article XIII, Conventions, Constitutional Amendment and Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article XIV, Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OUR CONSTITUTIONS: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Written by John L. Sanders, Director of the Institute of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

- [Constitution of 1776](#)
- [Convention of 1835](#)
- [Convention of 1861-62](#)
- [Convention of 1865-66](#)
- [Constitution of 1868](#)
North Carolina has had three Constitutions in her history as a State: the Constitution of 1776, the Constitution of 1868, and the Constitution of 1971.

**Constitution of 1776**

Drafted and promulgated by the Fifth Provincial Congress in December, 1776, without submission to the people, the Constitution of 1776 and its separate but accompanying Declaration of Rights sketched the main outlines of the new state government and secured the rights of the citizen from governmental interference. While the principle of separation of powers was explicitly affirmed and the familiar three branches of government were provided for, the true center of power lay in the General Assembly. That body not only exercised full legislative power; it also chose all the state executive and judicial officers, the former for short terms and the judges for life.

Profound distrust of the executive power is evident throughout the document. The Governor was chosen by the legislature for a one-year term and was eligible for only three terms in six years. The little power granted him was hedged about in many instances by requiring for its exercise the concurrence of a seven-member Council of State chosen by the legislature. Judicial offices were established, but the court system itself was left to legislative design. No system of local government was prescribed by the Constitution, although the offices of justice of the peace, sheriff, coroner, and constable were created.

The system of legislative representation was based on units of local government. The voters of each county elected one Senator and two members of the House of Commons, while six (later seven) towns each elected one member of the House. It was distinctly a property owner's government, for only landowners could vote for Senators until 1857, and progressive property qualifications were required of members of the House, Senators, and the Governor until 1868. Legislators were the only state officers who were elected by the people until 1836.

**The Convention of 1835**

Dissatisfaction with the legislative representation system, which gave no direct recognition to
population. resulted in the Convention of 1835. Extensive Constitutional amendments adopted by
that Convention were ratified by a vote of the people, 26,771 to 21,606 on November 9, 1835.
The Amendments of 1835 fixed the membership of the Senate and House at their present levels,
50 and 120. The House apportionment formula then devised gave one seat to each county and
distributed the remainder of the seats--nearly half of them at that time--according to a
mathematical formula favoring the more populous counties. From 1836 until 1868, Senators were
elected from districts laid out according to the amount of taxes paid to the State from the
respective counties, thus effecting senatorial representation in proportion to property values.

The Amendments of 1835 also made the Governor popularly elective for a two-year term, greatly
strengthening that office; relaxed the religious qualifications for office holding; abolished free
Negro suffrage; equalized the capitation tax on slaves and free white males; prohibited the
General Assembly from granting divorces, legitimating persons, or changing personal names by
private act; specified procedures for the impeachment of state officers and the removal of judges
for disability; made legislative sessions biennial instead of annual; and provided methods of
amending the Constitution. Following the precedent established in amending the United States
Constitution, the 1835 amendments were appended to the Constitution of 1776, not incorporated
in it as is the modern practice.

The Convention of 1861-62

The Convention of 1861-62, called by act of the General Assembly, took the State out of The
Union and into the Confederacy and adopted a dozen Constitutional amendments. These were
promulgated by the Convention without the necessity of voter approval, a procedure that was
permitted by the Constitution until 1971.

The Convention of 1865-66

The Convention of 1865-66, called by the Provisional Governor on orders of the President,
nullified secession and abolished slavery, with voters approval, in 1865. It also drafted a revised
Constitution in 1866. That document was largely a restatement of the Constitution of 1776 and the
1835 amendments, plus several new features. It was rejected by a vote of 21,770 to 19,880 on
August 2, 1866.

Constitution of 1868

The Convention of 1868

The Convention of 1868, called upon the initiative of Congress but with a popular vote of
approval, wrote a new Constitution which the people ratified in April of 1868 by a vote of 93,086
to 74,016. Drafted and put through the Convention by a combination of native Republicans and a
few Carpet- baggers, the Constitution was highly unpopular with the more conservative elements
of the State. For its time it was a progressive and democratic instrument of government. In this respect it differed markedly from the proposed Constitution of 1866. The Constitution of 1868 was an amalgam of provisions copied or adapted from the Declaration of Rights of 1776, the Constitution of 1776 and its amendments, the proposed Constitution of 1866, and the Constitutions of other states, together with some new and original provisions. Although often amended, a majority of the provisions of that document remained intact until 1971, and the Constitution of 1971 brought forward much of the 1868 language with little or no change.

The Constitution of 1868 incorporated the 1776 Declaration of Rights into the Constitution as Article I and added several important guarantees. To the people was given the power to elect all significant state executive officers, all judges, and all county officials, as well as legislators. All property qualifications for voting and office holding were abolished. The plan of representation in the Senate was changed from a property to a popular basis, and the 1835 House apportionment plan was retained. Annual legislative sessions were restored.

The executive branch of government was strengthened by popular election for four-year terms of office and the Governor's powers were increased significantly.

A simple and uniform court system was established with the jurisdiction of each court fixed in the Constitution. The distinctions between actions at law and suits in equity were abolished.

For the first time, detailed Constitutional provision was made for a system of taxation, and the powers of the General Assembly to levy taxes and to borrow money were limited. Homestead and personal property exemptions were granted. Free public schools were called for and the maintenance of penal and charitable institutions by the State was commanded. A uniform scheme of county and township government was prescribed.

The declared objective of the Conservative Party (under whose banner the older native political leaders grouped themselves) was to repeal the Constitution of 1868 at the earliest opportunity. When the Conservative Party gained control of the General Assembly in 1870, a proposal to call a convention of the people to revise the Constitution was submitted by the General Assembly to the voters and rejected in 1871 by a vote of 95,252 to 86,007.

The General Assembly thereupon resorted to the legislative initiative for amending the Constitution. That procedure then called for legislative approval of each proposed amendment at two successive sessions, followed by a vote of the people on the amendment. The 1871-72 legislative session adopted an act calling for about three dozen amendments to the Constitution which had the general purpose of restoring to the General Assembly the bulk of the power over local government, the courts, and the public schools and the University that had been taken from it by the Constitution of 1868. The 1872-73 session of the General Assembly approved for the second time and submitted to the people only eight of those amendments, all of which were approved by the voters in 1873 by wide margins. These amendments restored biennial sessions of
the General Assembly, transferred control of the University of North Carolina from the State Board of Education to the General Assembly, abolished various new state offices, altered the double office-holding prohibition, and repealed the prohibition against repudiation of the state debt.

The Convention of 1875

In 1875, the General Assembly called a convention of the people to consider Constitutional revision. No confirmation of that action by popular referendum was had, and none was then Constitutionally required. The Convention of 1875 (the most recent in the State's history) sat for five weeks in the fall of that year. It was a limited convention, certain actions—for example, the reinstatement of property qualifications for office-holding or voting—being forbidden to it.

The Convention of 1875 adopted and the voters on November 7, 1876, approved by a vote of 120,159 to 106,154 a set of 30 amendments affecting 36 sections of the Constitution. These amendments (which took effect on January 1, 1877) prohibited secret political societies, moved the legislative convening date from November of even numbered years to January of odd-numbered years, fixed in the Constitution for the first time the rate of legislative compensation, called for legislation establishing a State Department of Agriculture, abandoned the simplicity and uniformity of the 1868 court system by giving the General Assembly power to determine the jurisdiction of all courts below the Supreme Court and to establish such courts inferior to the Supreme Court as it might see fit, reduced the Supreme Court from five to three members, required Superior Court judges to rotate among all judicial districts of the State, disqualified for voting persons guilty of certain crimes, established a one-year residency requirement for voting, required non-discriminatory racial segregation in the public schools, gave the General Assembly full power to revise or abolish the form and powers of county and township governments, and simplified the procedure for Constitutional amendment by providing that the General Assembly might by act adopted by three-fifths of each house at one legislative session submit an amendment to the voters of the State (thus eliminating the former requirement of enactment by two successive sessions of the General Assembly). The principal effect of the amendments of 1873 and 1875 was to restore in considerable measure the former power of the General Assembly, particularly as to the courts and local government.

The amendments framed by the Convention of 1875 seem to have satisfied most of the need for Constitutional change for a generation, for only four amendments were submitted by the General Assembly to the voters throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Three of them were ratified; one failed.

In 1900 the suffrage article was revised to add the literacy test and poll tax requirement for voting (the latter provision was repealed in 1920). A slate of ten amendments prepared by a Constitutional commission and proposed by the General Assembly in 1913 was rejected by the voters in 1914. With the passage of time and amendments, the attitude towards the Constitution of
1868 had changed from resentment to a reverence so great that until the second third of the twentieth century, amendments were very difficult to obtain. Between 1900 and 1938 the voters ratified 15 and rejected 20 amendments. During the first third of this century, nevertheless, amendments were adopted lengthening the school term from four to six months, prohibiting legislative charters to private corporations, authorizing special Superior Court judges, further limiting the General Assembly's powers to levy taxes and incur debt, and abolishing the poll tax requirement for voting and reducing the residence qualification for voters. Amendments designed to restrict the legislature's power to enact local, private and special legislation were made partly ineffective by judicial interpretation.

The Proposed Constitution of 1933

A significant effort at general revision of the Constitution was made in 1931-33. A Constitutional Commission created by the General Assembly of 1931 drafted and the General Assembly of 1933 approved a revised Constitution. Blocked by a technicality raised in an advisory opinion of the State Supreme Court, the proposed Constitution of 1933 never reached the voters for approval. It would have granted the Governor the veto power; given to a Judicial Council composed of all the judges of the Supreme and Superior Courts power to make all rules of practice and procedure in the courts inferior to the Supreme Court; required the creation of inferior courts by general laws only; removed most of the limitations on the taxing powers of the General Assembly; required the General Assembly to provide for the organization and powers of local governments by general law only; established an appointive State Board of Education with general supervision over the public school system; and set forth an enlightened policy of state responsibility for the maintenance of educational, charitable, and reformatory institutions and programs.

Several provisions of the proposed Constitution of 1933 were later incorporated into the Constitution by individual amendments, and to a limited extent it served as a model for the work of the 1957-59 Constitutional Commission.

Between the mid-1930's and the late 1950's, greater receptiveness to Constitutional change resulted in amendments authorizing the classification of property for taxation; strengthening the limitations upon public debt; authorizing the General Assembly to enlarge the Supreme Court, divide the State into judicial divisions, increase the number of Superior Court judges, and create a Department of Justice under the Attorney General; enlarging the Council of State by three members; creating a new, appointive State Board of Education with general supervision of the schools; permitting women to serve as jurors; transferring the Governor's power to assign judges to the Chief Justice and his parole power to a Board of Paroles; permitting the waiver of indictment in non-capital cases; raising the compensation of the General Assembly and authorizing legislative expense allowances; increasing the general purpose property tax levy limitation and the maximum income tax rate; and authorizing the closing of public schools on a local option basis and the payment of educational expense grants in certain cases.
The increased legislative and public willingness to accept Constitutional change between 1934 and 1960 resulted in 32 Constitutional amendments being ratified by the voters while only six were rejected.

**The Constitutional Commission of 1957-58**

At the request of Governor Luther H. Hodges, the General Assembly of 1957 authorized the Governor to appoint a fifteen-member Constitutional Commission to study the need for changes in the Constitution and to make recommendations to the Governor and the 1959 General Assembly.

That Commission recommended rewriting the whole Constitution and submitting it to the voters for approval or disapproval as a unit, the changes suggested being too numerous to be effected by individual amendments. The proposed Constitution drafted by the Commission represented in large part a careful job of editorial pruning, rearrangement, clarification, and modernization, but it also included several significant substantive changes. The Senate would have been increased from 50 to 60 members and the initiative (but not the sole authority) for decennial redistricting of the Senate would have been shifted from the General Assembly to an ex-officio committee of three legislative officers. Decennial reapportionment of the House of Representatives would have been made a duty of the Speaker of the House, rather than of the General Assembly as a whole. Problems of succession to Constitutional State executive offices and of determination of issues of officers' disability would have been either resolved in the Constitution or their resolution assigned to the General Assembly. The authority to classify property for taxation and to exempt property from taxation would have been required to be exercised only by the General Assembly and only on a uniform, statewide basis. The requirement that the public schools constitute a "general and uniform system" would have been eliminated, and the Constitutional authority of the State Board of Education reduced. Fairly extensive changes were recommended in the judicial article of the Constitution, including the establishment of a General Court of Justice with an Appellate Division, a Superior Court Division, and a Local Trial Court Division. A uniform system of District Courts and Trial Commissioners would have replaced the existing multitude of inferior courts and justices of the peace, the creation of an intermediate Court of Appeals would have been provided for, and uniformity of jurisdiction of the courts within each division would have been required. Otherwise, the General Assembly would have retained essentially its then-existing power over the courts, their jurisdiction, and their procedures.

The General Assembly of 1959 also had before it a recommendation for a Constitutional amendment with respect to the court system that had originated with a Court Study Committee of the North Carolina Bar Association. In general, the recommendations of that Committee called for more fundamental changes in the courts than those of the Constitutional Commission. The principal difference between the two sets of recommendations lay in the extent of the proposed authority of the General Assembly over the courts. The Constitutional Commission generally favored legislative authority over the courts and proposed only moderate curtailment of it; the Court Study Committee accepted more literally the concept of an independent judiciary and its
The Constitution of North Carolina

proposals would have minimized the authority of the General Assembly over the courts of the State, though structurally, its system would have been much like that of the Constitutional Commission.

The proposed Constitution received extended attention from the General Assembly of 1959. The Senate modified and passed the bill to submit the proposed Constitution to the voters, but it failed to pass the House, due chiefly to the inability of the supporters of the two divergent approaches to court revision to reach agreement.

As had been true of the proposed Constitution of 1933, the proposed Constitution of 1959, though not adopted as a whole, subsequently provided the material for several amendment proposals that were submitted individually to the voters and approved by them during the next decade.

In the General Assembly of 1961, the proponents of court reform were successful in obtaining enactment of a Constitutional amendment, approved by the voters in 1962, creating a unified and uniform General Court of Justice for the State. Other amendments submitted by the same session and approved by the voters provided for the automatic decennial reapportionment of the State House of Representatives, clarified the provisions for succession to elective State executive offices and disability determination, authorized a reduction in the residence period for voters for President, allowed increases in the compensation of elected state executive officers during their terms, and required that the power of the General Assembly to classify and exempt property for taxation be exercised by it alone and only on a uniform, statewide basis.

The session of 1963 submitted two amendments: One to enlarge the rights of married women to deal with their own property was approved by the voters; one to enlarge the Senate from fifty to seventy members and allocate one Representative to each county was rejected by the voters. The General Assembly of 1965 submitted and the voters approved an amendment authorizing the legislative creation of a Court of Appeals.

The 1967 General Assembly proposed and the voters approved amendments authorizing the General Assembly to fix its own compensation and revising the legislative apportionment scheme to conform to the judicially-established requirement of representation in proportion to population in both houses.

Constitution of 1971

From 1869 through 1968, there were submitted to the voters of North Carolina a total of 97 propositions for amending the Constitution of the State. All but one of these proposals originated in the General Assembly. Of those 97 amendment proposals, 69 were ratified by the voters and 28 were rejected by them. The changing attitude of the voters toward Constitutional amendments is well illustrated by the fact that from 1869 to 1933, 21 of the 48 amendment propositions were rejected by the voters, a failure rate of three out of seven. Between 1933 and 1968, only seven of
49 proposed amendments were rejected by the voters, a failure rate of one out of seven.

After the amendments of the early 1960's, the pressure for Constitutional change seemed at the time to have abated. Yet while an increasingly frequently used amendment process had relieved many of the pressures that otherwise would have strengthened the case for Constitutional reform, it had not kept the Constitution current in all respects. Constitutional amendments usually were drafted in response to particular problems experienced or anticipated and generally they were limited in scope so as to achieve the essential goal, while arousing minimum unnecessary opposition. Thus amendments sometimes were not as comprehensive as they should have been to avoid inconsistency in result. Obsolete and invalid provisions had been allowed to remain in the Constitution to mislead the unwary reader. Moreover, in the absence of a comprehensive reappraisal, there had been no recent occasion to reconsider Constitutional provisions that might be obsolescent but might not have proved so frustrating or unpopular in their effect as to provoke curative amendments.

The Constitutional Study Commission of 1967

It was perhaps for these reasons that when Governor Dan K. Moore recommended to the North Carolina State Bar in the fall of 1967 that it take the lead in making a study of the need for revision of the State Constitution, the response was prompt and affirmative. The North Carolina State Bar and the North Carolina Bar Association joined to create the North Carolina State Constitution Study Commission as a joint agency of the two organizations. The 25 members of that commission (fifteen attorneys and ten laymen) were chosen by a steering committee representative of the sponsoring organizations. The Chairman of the Commission was former state Chief Justice Emery B. Denny.

The State Constitution Study Commission worked throughout most of 1968. It became clear early in the course of its proceedings that the amendments the Commission wished to propose were too numerous to be submitted to the voters as independent propositions. On the other hand, the Commission did not wish to embody all of its proposed changes in a single document, to be approved or disapproved by the voters on a single vote. The compromise procedure developed by the Commission and approved by the General Assembly was a blend of the two approaches. The Commission combined in a revised text of the Constitution all of the extensive editorial changes that it thought should be made in the Constitution, together with such substantive changes as the Commission deemed not to be controversial or fundamental in nature. These were embodied in the document that came to be known as the Constitution of 1971. Those proposals for change that were deemed to be sufficiently fundamental or potentially controversial in character as to justify it, the Commission set out as independent amendment propositions, to be considered by the General Assembly and by the voters of the State on their independent merits. Thus the opposition to the latter proposals would not be cumulated. The separate proposals framed by the Commission were ten in number, including one extensive revision of the finance article of the Constitution which was largely the work of the Local Government Study Commission, a legislatively-established group then at work on the revision of Constitutional and statutory provisions with
respect to local government. The amendments were so drafted that any number or combination of
them might be ratified by the voters and yet produce a consistent result.

The General Assembly of 1969, to which the recommendations of the State Constitution Study
Commission were submitted, received a total of 28 proposals for Constitutional amendments.
Constitutional revision was an active subject of interest throughout the session. The proposed
Constitution of 1971, in the course of seven roll-call votes (four in the House and three in the
Senate), received only one negative vote. The independent amendments fared variously;
ultimately six were approved by the General Assembly and submitted to the voters. These were
the executive reorganization amendment, the finance amendment, an amendment to the income
tax provision of the Constitution, a reassignment of the benefits of the escheats, authorization for
calling extra legislative sessions on the petition of members of the General Assembly, and
abolition of the literacy test for voting. All but the last two of these amendments had been
recommended by the State Constitution Study Commission. At the election held on November 3,
1970, the proposed Constitution of 1971 was approved by a vote of 393,759 to 251,132. Five of
the six separate amendments were approved by the voters; the literacy test repeal was rejected.

The Constitution of 1971 took effect under its own terms on July 1, 1971 (hence its designation as
the "Constitution of 1971"). So did the executive reorganization amendment, the income tax
amendment, the escheats amendment, and the amendment with respect to extra legislative
sessions, all of which amended the Constitution of 1971 at the instant it took effect. The finance
amendment, which made extensive revisions in the Constitution of 1971 with respect to debt and
local taxation, took effect on July 1, 1973. The two-year delay in its effective date was occasioned
by the necessity to conform state statutes with respect to local government finance to the terms of
the amendment.

The Constitution of 1971, the State Constitution Study Commission stated in its report
recommending its adoption,

effects a general editorial revision of the Constitution .... The
deletions, reorganizations, and improvements in the clarity and
consistency of language will be found in the proposed Constitu-
tion. Some of the changes are substantive, but none is calculated
to impair any present right of the individual citizen or to bring
about any fundamental change in the power of state and local
government or the distribution of that power.

In the new Constitution, the old fourteen-article organization of the Constitution was retained, but
the contents of several articles--notably Articles I, II, III, V, IX, and X--were rearranged in a more
logical sequence. Sections were shifted from one article to another to make a more logical subject-
matter arrangement. Clearly obsolete and Constitutionally invalid matter was omitted, as were
provisions essentially legislative in character. Uniformity of expression was sought where
uniformity of meaning was important. Directness and currency of language were also sought, together with standardization in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and other essentially editorial matters. Greater brevity of the Constitution as a whole was a by-product of the revision, though not itself a primary objective.

The Declaration of Rights (Article I), which dates from 1776 with some 1868 additions, was retained with a few additions. The organization of the article was improved and the frequently used subjunctive mood was replaced by the imperative in order to make clear that the provisions of that article are commands and not mere admonitions. (For example, "All elections ought to be free" became "All elections shall be free.") To the article were added a guarantee of freedom of speech, a guarantee of equal protection of the laws, and a prohibition against exclusion from jury service or other discrimination by the State on the basis of race or religion. Since all of the rights newly expressed in the Constitution of 1971 were already guaranteed by the United States Constitution, their inclusion simply constituted an explicit recognition by the State of their importance.

In the course of reorganizing and abbreviating Article III (the Executive), the Governor's role as chief executive was brought into clear focus. The scattered statements of the Governor's duties were collected in one section, to which was added a brief statement of his budget powers, formerly merely statutory in origin. No change was made in the Governor's eligibility or term, or in the list of state executives previously elected by the people. To the Council of State (formerly seven elected executives with the Governor as presiding officer) were added the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General as ex-officio members.

Having been entirely rewritten in 1962, the judicial article (Article IV) was the subject of little editorial alteration and of no substantive change. The editorial amendments to Article V, dealing with finance and taxation, were extensive. Provisions concerning finance were transferred to it from four other articles. The former finance provisions were expanded in some instances to make clearer the meaning of excessively condensed provisions. The only substantive change of note gave a wife who is the primary wage-earner in the family the same Constitutionally guaranteed income tax exemption now granted a husband who is the chief wage-earner; she already had that benefit under statute.

The revision of Article VI (voting and elections) added out-of-state and federal felonies to felonies committed against the State of North Carolina as grounds for denial of voting and office-holding rights in this State. The General Assembly was directed to enact general laws governing voter registration.

The provision that has been interpreted to mean that only voters can hold office was modified to limit its application to popularly elective offices only; thus it is left to the legislature to determine whether one must be a voter in order to hold an appointive office.
The Constitution of 1971 prohibits the concurrent holding of two or more elective state offices or of a federal office and an elective state office. It expressly prohibits the concurrent holding of any two or more appointive offices or places of trust or profit, or of any combination of elective and appointive offices or places of trust or profit, except as the General Assembly may allow by general law.

The power to provide for local government remains in the legislature, confining the Constitutional provisions on the subject to a general description of the General Assembly's plenary authority over local government, a declaration that any unit formed by the merger of a city and a county should be deemed both a city and a county for Constitutional purposes, and a section retaining the sheriff as an elective county officer.

The education article (Article IX) was rearranged to improve upon the former hodge-podge treatment of public schools and higher education, obsolete provisions especially those pertaining to racial matters) were eliminated, and other changes were made to reflect current practice in the administration and financing of schools.

The Constitutionally-mandated school term was extended from six months (set in 1918) to a minimum of nine months (where it was fixed by statute many years earlier). The possibly restrictive age limits on tuition-free public schooling were removed. Units of local government to which the General Assembly assigns a share of responsibility for financing public education were authorized to finance from local revenues education programs, including both public schools and technical institutes and community colleges, without a popular vote of approval. It was made mandatory (it was formerly permissive) that the General Assembly require school attendance.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction was eliminated as a voting member of the State Board of Education but retained as the Board's secretary. He was replaced with an additional at-large appointee. A potential conflict of authority between the Superintendent and the Board (both of which previously had Constitutional authority to administer the public schools) was eliminated by making the Superintendent the chief administrative officer of the Board, which is to supervise and administer the schools.

The provisions with respect to the state and county school funds were retained with only minor editorial modifications. Fines, penalties, and forfeitures continue to be earmarked for the county school fund.

The former provisions dealing with The University of North Carolina were broadened into a statement of the General Assembly's duty to maintain a system of higher education.

The General Assembly was authorized by the changes made in Article X (Homesteads and Exemptions) to set the amounts of the personal property exemption and the homestead exemption (Constitutionally fixed at $500 and $1,000 respectively since 1868) at what it considers to be
reasonable levels, with the Constitutional figures being treated as minimums. The provision protecting the rights of married women to deal with their own property was left untouched. The protection given life insurance taken out for the benefit of the wife and children of the insured was broadened.

The provisions prescribing the permissible punishments for crime and limiting the crimes punishable by death (Article XI) were left essentially intact.

The procedures for Constitutional revision (Article XIII) were made more explicit.

The five Constitutional amendments ratified at the same time as the Constitution of 1971 deserve particular mention.

**The Constitutional Amendments of 1970-71**

By the end of the 1960's, North Carolina state government consisted of over 200 state administrative agencies. The State Constitution Study Commission concluded on the advice of witnesses who had tried it that no governor could effectively oversee an administrative apparatus of such disjointed complexity. The Commission's solution was an amendment, patterned after the Model State Constitution and the Constitutions of a few other states, requiring the General Assembly to reduce the number of administrative departments to not more than 25 by 1975, and to give the Governor authority to effect agency reorganizations and consolidations, subject to disapproval by action of either house of the legislature if the changes affected existing statutes.

The second separate Constitutional amendment ratified in 1970 supplemented the existing authority of the Governor to call extra sessions of the General Assembly with the advice of the Council of State. The amendment provides that on written request of three-fifths of all the members of each house, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall convene an extra session of the General Assembly. Thus the legislative branch is now able to convene itself, notwithstanding the contrary wishes of the Governor.

The most significant of the separate amendments and in some ways the most important of the Constitutional changes ratified in 1970 was the finance amendment. The changes it effected are especially important in the financing of local government. The amendment became effective on July 1, 1973. Its principal provisions are as follows:

1. All forms of capitation or poll tax were prohibited.
2. The General Assembly was authorized to enact laws empowering counties, cities, and towns to establish special taxing districts less extensive in area than the entire county or city in order to finance the provision within those special districts of a higher level of governmental service than is available in the unit at
large, either by supplementing existing services or providing services not otherwise available. That provision eliminated the previous necessity of creating a new, independent governmental unit to accomplish the same result.

(3) For a century, the Constitution required that the levying of taxes and the borrowing of money by local government be approved by a vote of the people of the unit, unless the money was to be used for a "necessary expense." The court, not the General Assembly, was the final arbiter of what was a "necessary expense," and the State Supreme Court took a rather restrictive view of the embrace of that concept. The determination of what types of public expenditures should require voter approval and what types should be made by a governing board on its own authority was found by the General Assembly to be a legislative and not a judicial matter. In that conviction, the finance amendment provided that the General Assembly, acting on a uniform, statewide basis, should make the final determination of whether voter approval must be had for the levy of property taxes or the borrowing of money to finance particular activities of local government.

(4) To facilitate governmental and private cooperative endeavors, the state and local governmental units were authorized by the amendment to enter into contracts with and appropriate money to private entities "for the accomplishment of public purposes only."

(5) The various forms of public financial obligations were more precisely defined than in the previous Constitution, with the general effect of requiring voter approval only for the issuance of general obligation bonds and notes or for governmental guarantees of the debts of private persons or organizations. The General Assembly was directed to regulate by general law (permitting classified but not local acts) the contracting of debt by local governments.

(6) The amendments retained the existing limitation that the state and local governments may not, without voter approval, borrow more than the equivalent of two-thirds of the amount by which the unit's indebtedness was reduced during the last fiscal period, except for purposes listed in the Constitution. This list was lengthened to include "emergencies immediately threatening public health or safety."

(7) No change was made in the provisions with respect to the classification and exemption of property for purposes of property taxation. The limitation of .20 on the $100 valuation previously imposed on the general county property tax was omitted.
The fourth independent amendment also dealt with taxation. It struck out a schedule of specified minimum exemptions from the Constitutional provision on the state income tax, leaving those exemptions to be fixed by the General Assembly. This change enabled the legislature to provide for the filing of joint tax returns by husbands and wives and to adopt a "piggy-back" state income tax to be computed on the same basis as the federal income tax, thus relieving the taxpayer of two sets of computations. The amendment retains the maximum tax rate at ten per cent.

The final amendment ratified in 1970 assigned the benefits of property escheating to the State for want of an heir or other lawful claimant to a special fund, to be available to help needy North Carolina students attending public institutions of higher education in the State. Property escheating prior to July 1, 1971, continues to be held by The University of North Carolina.

The one amendment defeated by the voters in 1970 would have repealed the state Constitutional requirement that in order to register as a voter, one must be able to read and write the English language. That requirement was already ineffective by virtue of federal legislation and therefore the failure of repeal had no practical effect.

The General Assembly of 1971 submitted to the voters five state Constitutional amendments, all of which were ratified by the voters on November 7, 1972. Those amendments set the Constitutionally-specified voting age at 18 years, required the General Assembly to set maximum age limits for service as justices and judges of the state courts, authorized the General Assembly to prescribe procedures for the censure and removal of state judges and justices, added to the Constitution a statement of policy with regard to the conservation and the protection of natural resources, and limited the authority of the General Assembly to incorporate cities and towns within close proximity to existing municipalities.

The General Assembly at its 1973 session submitted and the voters in 1974 approved an amendment changing the title of the Solicitor to that of District Attorney. The 1974 legislative session submitted an amendment authorizing the issuance by state or county governments of revenue bonds to finance industrial facilities, which the voters rejected.

In 1975, the General Assembly submitted two amendments authorizing legislation to permit the issuance of revenue bonds (1) by state and local governments to finance health care facilities and (2) by counties to finance industrial facilities. Both received voter approval on March 23, 1976.

The Constitutional amendments of 1835 had permitted the voters to elect a Governor for two successive two-year terms. The Constitution of 1868 extended the Governor's term to four years but prohibited the Governor and Lieutenant Governor from serving successive four-year terms of the same office. The 1971 Constitution retained this limitation. An amendment to empower the voters to elect both the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to two successive terms of the same office was submitted by the 1977 General Assembly and ratified by the voters on November 8, 1977. Four other amendments were approved by the voters at the same time. They required that
the State operate on a balanced budget at all times, extended to widowers (as well as to widows) the benefit of the homestead exemption, allowed a woman (as well as a man) to insure her life for the benefit of her spouse or children free from all claims of the insured's creditors or of her (or his) estate, and authorized municipalities owning or operating electric power facilities to do so jointly with other public or private power organizations and to issue electric system revenue bonds to finance such facilities.

Only one amendment was proposed by the General Assembly of 1979. Approved by the voters in 1980, it required that all justices and judges of the State courts be licensed lawyers as a condition of election or appointment to the bench.

The 1981 session of the General Assembly sent five amendments to the voters for decision on June 29, 1982. The two amendments ratified by the voters authorized the General Assembly (1) to provide for the recall of retired State Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges to temporary duty on either court and (2) to empower the Supreme Court to review direct appeals from the Utilities Commission. The voters rejected amendments (1) extending the terms of all members of the General Assembly from two to four years; (2) authorizing the General Assembly to empower public agencies to develop new and existing seaports and airports, and to finance and refinance seaport, airport, and related commercial and industrial facilities for public and private parties; and (3) authorizing the General Assembly to empower a State agency to issue bonds to finance facilities for private institutions of higher education.

At its 1982 session, the General Assembly submitted two amendments. On November 2, 1982, the electorate ratified an amendment shifting the beginning of legislative terms from the date of election to January 1 next after the election, and rejected an amendment permitting the issuance of tax-increment bonds without voter approval.

On May 8, 1984, the voters ratified an amendment submitted by the General Assembly of 1983 to authorize the General Assembly to create an agency to issue revenue bonds to finance agricultural facilities. And on November 6, 1984, the voters approved an amendment requiring that the Attorney General and all District Attorneys be licensed lawyers as a condition of election or appointment.

An amendment to shift the elections for state legislative, executive, and judicial officers and for county officers from even-numbered to odd-numbered years (beginning in 1989 for legislators and 1993 for Governors and other state executives) was submitted by the General Assembly of 1985 to the voters, who rejected it on May 6, 1986. An amendment to revert to the pre-1977 Constitutional policy that barred the Governor and Lieutenant Governor from election to two successive terms of the same office was proposed by the 1985 legislative session for a popular vote on November 4, 1986, but in the meantime the 1986 adjourned session repealed the act proposing the amendment.
In mid-1986, the General Assembly at its adjourned session voted to send to the voters three Constitutional amendments, all three of which were approved on November 4, 1986. They (1) authorized legislation enabling state and local governments to develop seaports and airports and to participate jointly with other public agencies and with private parties and issue revenue bonds for that purpose; (2) authorized the State to issue tax-exempt revenue bonds to finance or refinance private college facilities; and (3) provided that when a vacancy occurs among the eight elected state executive officers (not including the Governor and Lieutenant Governor) or the elected judges and justices more than 60 days (it had been 30 days) before a general election, the vacancy must be filled at that election.

Neither the General Assembly of 1987-88 nor the General Assembly of 1989 submitted a Constitutional amendment to the voters.

Conclusion

The people of North Carolina have treated their Constitution with conservatism and respect. The fact that we have adopted only three Constitutions in two centuries of existence as a state is the chief evidence of that attitude. (Some states have adopted as many as five or ten Constitutions in a like period.) The relative fewness of amendments, even in recent years, is another point of contrast to many states. It reflects the fact that North Carolina has been less disposed than have many states to write into its state Constitution detailed provisions with respect to transitory matters better left to legislation. The Constitution has allowed the General Assembly wide latitude for decision on public affairs, and legislators have been willing to accept responsibility for and act on matters within their authority instead of passing the responsibility for difficult decisions on to the voters in the form of Constitutional amendments.

Constitutional draftsmen have not been so convinced of their own exclusive hold on wisdom or so doubtful of the reliability of later generations of legislators that they found it necessary to write into the Constitution the large amount of regulatory detail often found in state Constitutions. Delegates to Constitutional conventions and members of the General Assembly have acted consistently with the advice of the late John J. Parker, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (1925-58), who observed:

The purpose of a state Constitution is two-fold: (1) to protect the rights of the individual from encroachment by the State; and (2) to provide a framework of government for the State and its subdivisions. It is not the function of a Constitution to deal with temporary conditions, but to lay down general principles of government which must be observed amid changing conditions. It follows, then, that a Constitution should not contain elaborate legislative provisions, but should lay down briefly and clearly fundamental principles upon which government shall proceed,
leaving it to the people's representatives to apply these principles through legislation to conditions as they arise.
PREAMBLE

We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

That the great, general, and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established, and that the relations of this State to the Union and government of the United States and those of the people of this State to the rest of the American people may be defined and affirmed, we do declare that:

Section 1. The equality and rights of persons.

We hold it to be self-evident that all persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor, and the pursuit of happiness.

Sec. 2. Sovereignty of the people.

All political power is vested in and derived from the people; all government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the whole.

Sec. 3. Internal government of the State.

The people of this State have the inherent, sole, and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police thereof, and of altering or abolishing their Constitution and form of government whenever it may be necessary to their safety and happiness; but every such right shall be exercised in pursuance of law and consistently with the Constitution of the United States.
Sec. 4. Secession prohibited.

This State shall ever remain a member of the American Union; the people thereof are part of the American nation; there is no right on the part of this State to secede; and all attempts, from whatever source or upon whatever pretext, to dissolve this Union or to sever this Nation, shall be resisted with the whole power of the State.

Sec. 5. Allegiance to the United States.

Every citizen of this State owes paramount allegiance to the Constitution and government of the United States, and no law or ordinance of the State in contravention or subversion thereof can have any binding force.

Sec. 6. Separation of powers.

The legislative, executive, and supreme judicial powers of the State government shall be forever separate and distinct from each other.

Sec. 7. Suspending laws.

All power of suspending laws or the execution of laws by any authority, without the consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights and shall not be exercised.

Sec. 8. Representation and taxation.

The people of this State shall not be taxed or made subject to the payment of any impost or duty without the consent of themselves or their representatives in the General Assembly, freely given.

Sec. 9. Frequent elections.

For redress of grievances and for amending and strengthening the laws, elections shall be often held.

Sec. 10. Free elections.

All elections shall be free.

Sec. 11. Property qualifications.
As political rights and privileges are not dependent upon or modified by property, no property qualification shall affect the right to vote or hold office.

Sec. 12. Right of assembly and petition.

The people have a right to assemble together to consult for their common good, to instruct their representatives, and to apply to the General Assembly for redress of grievances; but secret political societies are dangerous to the liberties of a free people and shall not be tolerated.

Sec. 13. Religious liberty.

All persons have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience.


Freedom of speech and of the press are two of the great bulwarks of liberty and therefore shall never be restrained, but every person shall be held responsible for their abuse.

Sec. 15. Education.

The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right.

Sec. 16. Ex post facto laws.

Retrospective laws, punishing acts committed before the existence of such laws and by them only declared criminal, are oppressive, unjust, and incompatible with liberty, and therefore no ex post facto law shall be enacted. No law taxing retrospectively sales, purchases, or other acts previously done shall be enacted.

Sec. 17. Slavery and involuntary servitude.

Slavery is forever prohibited. Involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the parties have been adjudged guilty, is forever prohibited.

Sec. 18. Court shall be open.

All courts shall be open; every person for an injury done him in his lands, goods, person, or reputation shall have remedy by due course of law; and right and justice shall be administered
without favor, denial, or delay.

**Sec. 19. Law of the land; equal protection of the laws.**

No person shall be taken, imprisoned, or disseized of his freehold, liberties, or privileges, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any manner deprived of his life, liberty, or property, but by the law of the land. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws; nor shall any person be subjected to discrimination by the State because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

**Sec. 20. General warrants.**

General warrants, whereby any officer or other person may be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of the act committed, or to seize any person or persons not named, whose offense is not particularly described and supported by evidence, are dangerous to liberty and shall not be granted.

**Sec. 21. Inquiry into restraints on liberty.**

Every person restrained of his liberty is entitled to a remedy to inquire into the lawfulness thereof, and to remove the restraint if unlawful, and that remedy shall not be denied or delayed. The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended.

**Sec. 22. Modes of prosecution.**

Except in misdemeanor cases initiated in the District Court Division, no person shall be put to answer any criminal charge but by indictment, presentment, or impeachment. But any person, when represented by counsel, may, under such regulations as the General Assembly shall prescribe, waive indictment in noncapital cases.

**Sec. 23. Rights of accused.**

In all criminal prosecutions, every person charged with crime has the right to be informed of the accusation and to confront the accusers and witnesses with other testimony, and to have counsel for defense, and not be compelled to give self-incriminating evidence, or to pay costs, jail fees, or necessary witness fees of the defense, unless found guilty.

**Sec. 24. Right of jury trial in criminal cases.**

No person shall be convicted of any crime but by the unanimous verdict of a jury in open court. The General Assembly may, however, provide for other means of trial for misdemeanors, with the right of appeal for trial de novo.
Sec. 25. Right of jury trial in civil cases.

In all controversies at law respecting property, the ancient mode of trial by jury is one of the best securities of the rights of the people, and shall remain sacred and inviolable.


No person shall be excluded from jury service on account of sex, race, color, religion, or national origin.

Sec. 27. Bail, fines, and punishments.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishments inflicted.

Sec. 28. Imprisonment for debt.

There shall be no imprisonment for debt in this State, except in cases of fraud.

Sec. 29. Treason against the State.

Treason against the State shall consist only of levying war against it or adhering to its enemies by giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court. No conviction of treason or attainder shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture.

Sec. 30. Militia and the right to bear arms.

A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed; and, as standing armies in time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they shall not be maintained, and the military shall be kept under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power. Nothing herein shall justify the practice of carrying concealed weapons, or prevent the General Assembly from enacting penal statutes against that practice.

Sec. 31. Quartering of soldiers.

No soldier shall in time of peace be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war but in a manner prescribed by law.
Sec. 32. Exclusive emoluments.

No person or set of persons is entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community but in consideration of public services.

Sec. 33. Hereditary emoluments and honors.

No hereditary emoluments, privileges, or honors shall be granted or conferred in this State.

Sec. 34. Perpetuities and monopolies.

Perpetuities and monopolies are contrary to the genius of a free state and shall not be allowed.

Sec. 35. Recurrence to fundamental principles.

A frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty.

Sec. 36. Other rights of the people.

The enumeration of rights in this Article shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people.

Sec. 37. Rights of victims of crime.

(1) Basic rights. Victims of crime, as prescribed by law, shall be entitled to the following basic rights:

(a) The right as prescribed by law to be informed of and to be present at court proceedings of the accused.

(b) The right to be heard at sentencing of the accused in a manner prescribed by law, and at other times as prescribed by law or deemed appropriate by the court.

(c) The right as prescribed by law to receive restitution.

(d) The right as prescribed by law to be given information about the crime, how the criminal justice system works, the rights of victims, and the availability of services for victims.

(e) The right as prescribed by law to receive information about the conviction or final
disposition and sentence of the accused.

(f) The right as prescribed by law to receive notification of escape, release, proposed parole or pardon of the accused, or notice of a reprieve or commutation of the accused's sentence.

(g) The right as prescribed by law to present their views and concerns to the Governor or agency considering any action that could result in the release of the accused, prior to such action becoming effective.

(h) The right as prescribed by law to confer with the prosecution.

(2) No money damages; other enforcement. Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating a claim for money damages against the State, a county, a municipality, or any of the agencies, instrumentalities, or employees thereof. The General Assembly may provide for other remedies to ensure adequate enforcement of this section.

(3) No ground for relief in criminal case. The failure or inability of any person to provide a right or service provided under this section may not be used by a defendant in a criminal case, an inmate, or any other accused as a ground for relief in any trial, appeal, postconviction litigation, habeas corpus, civil action, or any similar criminal or civil proceeding. (1995, c. 438, s. 1.)
ARTICLE II

LEGISLATIVE

Section 1. Legislative power.

The legislative power of the State shall be vested in the General Assembly, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

Sec. 2. Number of Senators.

The Senate shall be composed of 50 Senators, biennially chosen by ballot.

Sec. 3. Senate districts; apportionment of Senators.

The Senators shall be elected from districts. The General Assembly, at the first regular session convening after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of Congress, shall revise the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among those districts, subject to the following requirements:

(1) Each Senator shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, the number of inhabitants that each Senator represents being determined for this purpose by dividing the population of the district that he represents by the number of Senators apportioned to that district;

(2) Each senate district shall at all times consist of contiguous territory;

(3) No county shall be divided in the formation of a senate district;

(4) When established, the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators shall remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of population taken by order of Congress.

Sec. 4. Number of Representatives.
The House of Representatives shall be composed of 120 Representatives, biennially chosen by ballot.

**Sec. 5. Representative districts; apportionment of Representatives.**

The Representatives shall be elected from districts. The General Assembly, at the first regular session convening after the return of every decennial census of population taken by order of Congress, shall revise the representative districts and the apportionment of Representatives among those districts, subject to the following requirements:

1. Each Representative shall represent, as nearly as may be, an equal number of inhabitants, the number of inhabitants that each Representative represents being determined for this purpose by dividing the population of the district that he represents by the number of Representatives apportioned to that district;

2. Each representative district shall at all times consist of contiguous territory;

3. No county shall be divided in the formation of a representative district;

4. When established, the representative districts and the apportionment of Representatives shall remain unaltered until the return of another decennial census of population taken by order of Congress.

**Sec. 6. Qualifications for Senator.**

Each Senator, at the time of his election, shall be not less than 25 years of age, shall be a qualified voter of the State, and shall have resided in the State as a citizen for two years and in the district for which he is chosen for one year immediately preceding his election.

**Sec. 7. Qualifications for Representative.**

Each Representative, at the time of his election, shall be a qualified voter of the State, and shall have resided in the district for which he is chosen for one year immediately preceding his election.

**Sec. 8. Elections.**

The election for members of the General Assembly shall be held for the respective districts in 1972 and every two years thereafter, at the places and on the day prescribed by law.

**Sec. 9. Term of office.**
The term of office of Senators and Representatives shall commence on the first day of January next after their election.

**Sec. 10. Vacancies.**

Every vacancy occurring in the membership of the General Assembly by reason of death, resignation, or other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed by law.

**Sec. 11. Sessions.**

(1) Regular Sessions. The General Assembly shall meet in regular session in 1973 and every two years thereafter on the day prescribed by law. Neither house shall proceed upon public business unless a majority of all of its members are actually present.

(2) Extra sessions on legislative call. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall convene the General Assembly in extra session by their joint proclamation upon receipt by the President of the Senate of written requests therefor signed by three-fifths of all the members of the Senate and upon receipt by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of written requests therefor signed by three-fifths of all the members of the House of Representatives.

**Sec. 12. Oath of members.**

Each member of the General Assembly, before taking his seat, shall take an oath or affirmation that he will support the Constitution and laws of the United States and the Constitution of the State of North Carolina, and will faithfully discharge his duty as a member of the Senate or House of Representatives.

**Sec. 13. President of the Senate.**

The Lieutenant Governor shall be President of the Senate and shall preside over the Senate, but shall have no vote unless the Senate is equally divided.

**Sec. 14. Other officers of the Senate.**

(1) President Pro Tempore - succession to presidency. The Senate shall elect from its membership a President Pro Tempore, who shall become President of the Senate upon the failure of the Lieutenant Governor-elect to qualify, or upon succession by the Lieutenant Governor to the office of Governor, or upon the death, resignation, or removal from office of the President of the Senate, and who shall serve until the expiration of his term of office as Senator.
(2) President Pro Tempore - temporary succession. During the physical or mental incapacity of the President of the Senate to perform the duties of his office, or during the absence of the President of the Senate, the President Pro Tempore shall preside over the Senate.

(3) Other officers. The Senate shall elect its other officers.

Sec. 15. Officers of the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives shall elect its Speaker and other officers.

Sec. 16. Compensation and allowances.

The members and officers of the General Assembly shall receive for their services the compensation and allowances prescribed by law. An increase in the compensation or allowances of members shall become effective at the beginning of the next regular session of the General Assembly following the session at which it was enacted.

Sec. 17. Journals.

Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, which shall be printed and made public immediately after the adjournment of the General Assembly.

Sec. 18. Protests.

Any member of either house may dissent from and protest against any act or resolve which he may think injurious to the public or to any individual, and have the reasons of his dissent entered on the journal.

Sec. 19. Record votes.

Upon motion made in either house and seconded by one fifth of the members present, the yeas and nays upon any question shall be taken and entered upon the journal.

Sec. 20. Powers of the General Assembly.

Each house shall be judge of the qualifications and elections of its own members, shall sit upon its own adjournment from day to day, and shall prepare bills to be enacted into laws. The two houses may jointly adjourn to any future day or other place. Either house may, of its own motion, adjourn for a period not in excess of three days.

Sec. 21. Style of the acts.
The style of the acts shall be: "The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:"

**Sec. 22. Action on bills.**

(1) Bills subject to veto by Governor; override of veto. Except as provided by subsections (2) through (6) of this section, all bills shall be read three times in each house and shall be signed by the presiding officer of each house before being presented to the Governor. If the Governor approves, the Governor shall sign it and it shall become a law; but if not, the Governor shall return it with objections, together with a veto message stating the reasons for such objections, to that house in which it shall have originated, which shall enter the objections and veto message at large on its journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such reconsideration three-fifths of the members of that house present and voting shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections and veto message, to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered; and if approved by three-fifths of the members of that house present and voting, it shall become a law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. In all such cases the votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of the members voting shall be entered on the journal of each house respectively.

(2) Amendments to Constitution of North Carolina. Every bill proposing a new or revised Constitution or an amendment or amendments to this Constitution or calling a convention of the people of this State, and containing no other matter, shall be submitted to the qualified voters of this State after it shall have been read three times in each house and signed by the presiding officers of both houses.

(3) Amendments to Constitution of the United States. Every bill approving an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, or applying for a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States, and containing no other matter, shall be read three times in each house before it becomes law, and shall be signed by the presiding officers of both houses.

(4) Joint resolutions. Every joint resolution shall be read three times in each house before it becomes effective and shall be signed by the presiding officers of both houses.

(5) Other exceptions. Every bill:

(a) In which the General Assembly makes an appointment or appointments to public office and which contains no other matter;

(b) Revising the senate districts and the apportionment of Senators among those districts and containing no other matter;
(c) Revising the representative districts and the apportionment of Representatives among those districts and containing no other matter; or

(d) Revising the districts for the election of members of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States and the apportionment of Representatives among those districts and containing no other matter,

shall be read three times in each house before it becomes law and shall be signed by the presiding officers of both houses.

(6) Local bills. Every bill that applies in fewer than 15 counties shall be read three times in each house before it becomes law and shall be signed by the presiding officers of both houses. The exemption from veto by the Governor provided in this subsection does not apply if the bill, at the time it is signed by the presiding officers:

(a) Would extend the application of a law signed by the presiding officers during that two year term of the General Assembly so that the law would apply in more than half the counties in the State, or

(b) Would enact a law identical in effect to another law or laws signed by the presiding officers during that two year term of the General Assembly that the result of those laws taken together would be a law applying in more than half the counties in the State.

Notwithstanding any other language in this subsection, the exemption from veto provided by this subsection does not apply to any bill to enact a general law classified by population or other criteria, or to any bill that contains an appropriation from the State treasury.

(7) Time for action by Governor; reconvening of session. If any bill shall not be returned by the Governor within 10 days after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the General Assembly shall have adjourned:

(a) For more than 30 days jointly as provided under Section 20 of Article II of this Constitution; or

(b) Sine die

in which case it shall become a law unless, within 30 days after such adjournment, it is returned by the Governor with objections and veto message to that house in which it shall have originated. When the General Assembly has adjourned sine die or for more than 30 days jointly as provided under Section 20 of Article II of this Constitution, the Governor shall reconvene that session as provided by Section 5(11) of Article III of this Constitution for reconsideration of
the bill, and if the Governor does not reconvene the session, the bill shall become law on the
fortieth day after such adjournment. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, if the Governor
prior to reconvening the session receives written requests dated no earlier than 30 days after
such adjournment, signed by a majority of the members of each house that a reconvened
session to reconsider vetoed legislation is unnecessary, the Governor shall not reconvene the
session for that purpose and any legislation vetoed in accordance with this section after
adjournment shall not become law.

(8) Return of bills after adjournment. For purposes of return of bills not approved by the
Governor, each house shall designate an officer to receive returned bills during its adjournment.
(1995, c. 5, s. 1.)

Sec. 23. Revenue bills.

No laws shall be enacted to raise money on the credit of the State, or to pledge the faith of the
State directly or indirectly for the payment of any debt, or to impose any tax upon the people of
the State, or to allow the counties, cities, or towns to do so, unless the bill for the purpose shall
have been read three several times in each house of the General Assembly and passed three
several readings, which readings shall have been on three different days, and shall have been
agreed to by each house respectively, and unless the yeas and nays on the second and third
readings of the bill shall have been entered on the journal.

Sec. 24. Limitations on local, private, and special legislation.

(1) Prohibited subjects. The General Assembly shall not enact any local, private, or special act or
resolution:

(a) Relating to health, sanitation, and the abatement of nuisances;

(b) Changing the names of cities, towns, and townships;

(c) Authorizing the laying out, opening, altering, maintaining, or discontinuing of highways,
streets, or alleys;

(d) Relating to ferries or bridges;

(e) Relating to non-navigable streams;

(f) Relating to cemeteries;
(g) Relating to the pay of jurors;

(h) Erecting new townships, or changing township lines, or establishing or changing the lines of school districts;

(i) Remitting fines, penalties, and forfeitures, or refunding moneys legally paid into the public treasury;

(j) Regulating labor, trade, mining, or manufacturing;

(k) Extending the time for the levy or collection of taxes or otherwise relieving any collector of taxes from the due performance of his official duties or his sureties from liability;

(l) Giving effect to informal wills and deeds;

(m) Granting a divorce or securing alimony in any individual case;

(n) Altering the name of any person, or legitimating any person not born in lawful wedlock, or restoring to the rights of citizenship any person convicted of a felony.

(2) Repeals. Nor shall the General Assembly enact any such local, private, or special act by the partial repeal of a general law; but the General Assembly may at any time repeal local, private, or special laws enacted by it.

(3) Prohibited acts void. Any local, private, or special act or resolution enacted in violation of the provisions of this Section shall be void.

(4) General laws. The General Assembly may enact general laws regulating the matters set out in this Section.

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ARTICLE III

EXECUTIVE

Section 1. Executive power.

The executive power of the State shall be vested in the Governor.

Sec. 2. Governor and Lieutenant Governor: election, term, and qualifications.

(1) Election and term. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor shall be elected by the qualified voters of the State in 1972 and every four years thereafter, at the same time and places as members of the General Assembly are elected. Their term of office shall be four years and shall commence on the first day of January next after their election and continue until their successors are elected and qualified.

(2) Qualifications. No person shall be eligible for election to the office of Governor or Lieutenant Governor unless, at the time of his election, he shall have attained the age of 30 years and shall have been a citizen of the United States for five years and a resident of this State for two years immediately preceding his election. No person elected to the office of Governor or Lieutenant Governor shall be eligible for election to more than two consecutive terms of the same office.

Sec. 3. Succession to office of Governor.

(1) Succession as Governor. The Lieutenant Governor-elect shall become Governor upon the failure of the Governor-elect to qualify. The Lieutenant Governor shall become Governor upon the death, resignation, or removal from office of the Governor. The further order of succession to the office of Governor shall be prescribed by law. A successor shall serve for the remainder of the term of the Governor whom he succeeds and until a new Governor is elected and qualified.

(2) Succession as Acting Governor. During the absence of the Governor from the State, or during the physical or mental incapacity of the Governor to perform the duties of his office, the Lieutenant Governor shall be Acting Governor. The further order of succession as Acting Governor shall be prescribed by law.
(3) Physical incapacity. The Governor may, by a written statement filed with the Attorney General, declare that he is physically incapable of performing the duties of his office, and may thereafter in the same manner declare that he is physically capable of performing the duties of his office.

(4) Mental incapacity. The mental incapacity of the Governor to perform the duties of his office shall be determined only by joint resolution adopted by a vote of two-thirds of all the members of each house of the General Assembly. Thereafter, the mental capacity of the Governor to perform the duties of his office shall be determined only by joint resolution adopted by a vote of a majority of all the members of each house of the General Assembly. In all cases, the General Assembly shall give the Governor such notice as it may deem proper and shall allow him an opportunity to be heard before a joint session of the General Assembly before it takes final action. When the General Assembly is not in session, the Council of State, a majority of its members concurring, may convene it in extra session for the purpose of proceeding under this paragraph.

(5) Impeachment. Removal of the Governor from office for any other cause shall be by impeachment.

Sec. 4. Oath of office for Governor.

The Governor, before entering upon the duties of his office, shall, before any Justice of the Supreme Court, take an oath or affirmation that he will support the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of North Carolina, and that he will faithfully perform the duties pertaining to the office of governor.

Sec. 5. Duties of Governor.

(1) Residence. The Governor shall reside at the seat of government of this State.

(2) Information to General Assembly. The Governor shall from time to time give the General Assembly information of the affairs of the State and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall deem expedient.

(3) Budget. The Governor shall prepare and recommend to the General Assembly a comprehensive budget of the anticipated revenue and proposed expenditures of the State for the ensuing fiscal period. The budget as enacted by the General Assembly shall be administered by the Governor.

The total expenditures of the State for the fiscal period covered by the budget shall not exceed the total of receipts during that fiscal period and the surplus remaining in the State Treasury at
the beginning of the period. To insure that the State does not incur a deficit for any fiscal period, the Governor shall continually survey the collection of the revenue and shall effect the necessary economies in State expenditures, after first making adequate provision for the prompt payment of the principal of and interest on bonds and notes of the State according to their terms, whenever he determines that receipts during the fiscal period, when added to any surplus remaining in the State Treasury at the beginning of the period, will not be sufficient to meet budgeted expenditures. This section shall not be construed to impair the power of the State to issue its bonds and notes within the limitations imposed in Article V of this Constitution, nor to impair the obligation of bonds and notes of the State now outstanding or issued hereafter.

(4) Execution of laws. The Governor shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

(5) Commander in Chief. The Governor shall be Commander in Chief of the military forces of the State except when they shall be called into the service of the United States.

(6) Clemency. The Governor may grant reprieves, commutations, and pardons, after conviction, for all offenses (except in cases of impeachment), upon such conditions as he may think proper, subject to regulations prescribed by law relative to the manner of applying for pardons. The terms reprieves, commutations, and pardons shall not include paroles.

(7) Extra sessions. The Governor may, on extraordinary occasions, by and with the advice of the Council of State, convene the General Assembly in extra session by his proclamation, stating therein the purpose or purposes for which they are thus convened.

(8) Appointments. The Governor shall nominate and by and with the advice and consent of a majority of the Senators appoint all officers whose appointments are not otherwise provided for.

(9) Information. The Governor may at any time require information in writing from the head of any administrative department or agency upon any subject relating to the duties of his office.

(10) Administrative reorganization. The General Assembly shall prescribe the functions, powers, and duties of the administrative departments and agencies of the State and may alter them from time to time, but the Governor may make such changes in the allocation of offices and agencies and in the allocation of those functions, powers, and duties as he considers necessary for efficient administration. If those changes affect existing law, they shall be set forth in executive orders, which shall be submitted to the General Assembly not later than the sixtieth calendar day of its session, and shall become effective and shall have the force of law upon adjournment sine die of the session, unless specifically disapproved by resolution of either house of the General Assembly or specifically modified by joint resolution of both houses of the General Assembly.
(11) Reconvened sessions. The Governor shall, when required by Section 22 of Article II of this Constitution, reconvene a session of the General Assembly. At such reconvened session, the General Assembly may only consider such bills as were returned by the Governor to that reconvened session for reconsideration. Such reconvened session shall begin on a date set by the Governor, but no later than 40 days after the General Assembly adjourned:

(a) For more than 30 days jointly as provided under Section 20 of Article II of this Constitution; or

(b) Sine die. If the date of reconvening the session occurs after the expiration of the terms of office of the members of the General Assembly, then the members serving for the reconvened session shall be the members for the succeeding term. (1969, c. 932, s. 1; 1977, c. 690, s. 1; 1995, c. 5, s. 2.)

Sec. 6. Duties of the Lieutenant Governor.

The Lieutenant Governor shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no vote unless the Senate is equally divided. He shall perform such additional duties as the General Assembly or the Governor may assign to him. He shall receive the compensation and allowances prescribed by law.

Sec. 7. Other elective officers.

(1) Officers. A Secretary of State, an Auditor, a Treasurer, a Superintendent of Public Instruction, an Attorney General, a Commissioner of Agriculture, a Commissioner of Labor, and a Commissioner of Insurance shall be elected by the qualified voters of the State in 1972 and every four years thereafter, at the same time and places as members of the General Assembly are elected. Their term of office shall be four years and shall commence on the first day of January next after their election and continue until their successors are elected and qualified.

(2) Duties. Their respective duties shall be prescribed by law.

(3) Vacancies. If the office of any of these officers is vacated by death, resignation, or otherwise, it shall be the duty of the Governor to appoint another to serve until his successor is elected and qualified. Every such vacancy shall be filled by election at the first election for members of the General Assembly that occurs more than 60 days after the vacancy has taken place, and the person chosen shall hold the office for the remainder of the unexpired term fixed in this Section. When a vacancy occurs in the office of any of the officers named in this Section and the term expires on the first day of January succeeding the next election for members of the General Assembly, the Governor shall appoint to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term of the office.
(4) Interim officers. Upon the occurrence of a vacancy in the office of any one of these officers for any of the causes stated in the preceding paragraph, the Governor may appoint an interim officer to perform the duties of that office until a person is appointed or elected pursuant to this Section to fill the vacancy and is qualified.

(5) Acting officers. During the physical or mental incapacity of any one of these officers to perform the duties of his office, as determined pursuant to this Section, the duties of his office shall be performed by an acting officer who shall be appointed by the Governor.

(6) Determination of incapacity. The General Assembly shall by law prescribe with respect to those officers, other than the Governor, whose offices are created by this Article, procedures for determining the physical or mental incapacity of any officer to perform the duties of his office, and for determining whether an officer who has been temporarily incapacitated has sufficiently recovered his physical or mental capacity to perform the duties of his office. Removal of those officers from office for any other cause shall be by impeachment.

(7) Special Qualifications for Attorney General. Only persons duly authorized to practice law in the courts of this State shall be eligible for appointment or election as Attorney General.

Sec. 8. Council of State.

The Council of State shall consist of the officers whose offices are established by this Article.

Sec. 9. Compensation and allowances.

The officers whose offices are established by this Article shall at stated periods receive the compensation and allowances prescribed by law, which shall not be diminished during the time for which they have been chosen.

Sec. 10. Seal of State. There shall be a seal of the State, which shall be kept by the Governor and used by him as occasion may require, and shall be called "The Great Seal of the State of North Carolina". All grants or commissions shall be issued in the name and by the authority of the State of North Carolina, sealed with "The Great Seal of the State of North Carolina", and signed by the Governor.

Sec. 11. Administrative departments. Not later than July 1, 1975, all administrative departments, agencies, and offices of the State and their respective functions, powers, and duties shall be allocated by law among and within not more than 25 principal administrative departments so as to group them as far as practicable according to major purposes. Regulatory, quasi-judicial, and temporary agencies may, but need not, be allocated within a principal department.
ARTICLE IV.

JUDICIAL

Section 1. Judicial power.

The judicial power of the State shall, except as provided in Section 3 of this Article, be vested in a Court for the Trial of Impeachments and in a General Court of Justice. The General Assembly shall have no power to deprive the judicial department of any power or jurisdiction that rightfully pertains to it as a co-ordinate department of the government, nor shall it establish or authorize any courts other than as permitted by this Article.

Sec. 2. General Court of Justice.

The General Court of Justice shall constitute a unified judicial system for purposes of jurisdiction, operation, and administration, and shall consist of an Appellate Division, a Superior Court Division, and a District Court Division.

Sec. 3. Judicial powers of administrative agencies.

The General Assembly may vest in administrative agencies established pursuant to law such judicial powers as may be reasonably necessary as an incident to the accomplishment of the purposes for which the agencies were created. Appeals from administrative agencies shall be to the General Court of Justice.

Sec. 4. Court for the Trial of Impeachments.

The House of Representatives solely shall have the power of impeaching. The Court for the Trial of Impeachments shall be the Senate. When the Governor or Lieutenant Governor is impeached, the Chief Justice shall preside over the Court. A majority of the members shall be necessary to a quorum, and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senators present. Judgment upon conviction shall not extend beyond removal from and disqualification to hold office in this State, but the party shall be liable to indictment and punishment according to law.
Sec. 5. Appellate division.

The Appellate Division of the General Court of Justice shall consist of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals.

Sec. 6. Supreme Court.

(1) Membership. The Supreme Court shall consist of a Chief Justice and six Associate Justices, but the General Assembly may increase the number of Associate Justices to not more than eight. In the event the Chief Justice is unable, on account of absence or temporary incapacity, to perform any of the duties placed upon him, the senior Associate Justice available may discharge those duties.

(2) Sessions of the Supreme Court. The sessions of the Supreme Court shall be held in the City of Raleigh unless otherwise provided by the General Assembly.

Sec. 7. Court of Appeals.

The structure, organization, and composition of the Court of Appeals shall be determined by the General Assembly. The Court shall have not less than five members, and may be authorized to sit in divisions, or other than en banc. Sessions of the Court shall be held at such times and places as the General Assembly may prescribe.

Sec. 8. Retirement of Justices and Judges.

The General Assembly shall provide by general law for the retirement of Justices and Judges of the General Court of Justice, and may provide for the temporary recall of any retired Justice or Judge to serve on the court or courts of the division from which he was retired. The General Assembly shall also prescribe maximum age limits for service as a Justice or Judge.

Sec. 9. Superior Courts.

(1) Superior Court districts. The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the State into a convenient number of Superior Court judicial districts and shall provide for the election of one or more Superior Court Judges for each district. Each regular Superior Court Judge shall reside in the district for which he is elected. The General Assembly may provide by general law for the selection or appointment of special or emergency Superior Court Judges not selected for a particular judicial district.

(2) Open at all times; sessions for trial of cases. The Superior Courts shall be open at all times for the transaction of all business except the trial of issues of fact requiring a jury. Regular trial
sessions of the Superior Court shall be held at times fixed pursuant to a calendar of courts promulgated by the Supreme Court. At least two sessions for the trial of jury cases shall be held annually in each county.

(3) Clerks. A Clerk of the Superior Court for each county shall be elected for a term of four years by the qualified voters thereof, at the same time and places as members of the General Assembly are elected. If the office of Clerk of the Superior Court becomes vacant otherwise than by the expiration of the term, or if the people fail to elect, the senior regular resident Judge of the Superior Court serving the county shall appoint to fill the vacancy until an election can be regularly held.

**Sec. 10. District Courts.**

The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the State into a convenient number of local court districts and shall prescribe where the District Courts shall sit, but a District Court must sit in at least one place in each county. District Judges shall be elected for each district for a term of four years, in a manner prescribed by law. When more than one District Judge is authorized and elected for a district, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall designate one of the judges as Chief District Judge. Every District Judge shall reside in the district for which he is elected. For each county, the senior regular resident Judge of the Superior Court serving the county shall appoint for a term of two years, from nominations submitted by the Clerk of the Superior Court of the county, one or more Magistrates who shall be officers of the District Court. The number of District Judges and Magistrates shall, from time to time, be determined by the General Assembly. Vacancies in the office of District Judge shall be filled for the unexpired term in a manner prescribed by law. Vacancies in the office of Magistrate shall be filled for the unexpired term in the manner provided for original appointment to the office.

**Sec. 11. Assignment of Judges.**

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, acting in accordance with rules of the Supreme Court, shall make assignments of Judges of the Superior Court and may transfer District Judges from one district to another for temporary or specialized duty. The principle of rotating Superior Court Judges among the various districts of a division is a salutary one and shall be observed. For this purpose the General Assembly may divide the State into a number of judicial divisions. Subject to the general supervision of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, assignment of District Judges within each local court district shall be made by the Chief District Judge.

**Sec. 12. Jurisdiction of the General Court of Justice.**

(1) Supreme Court. The Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction to review upon appeal any decision of the courts below, upon any matter of law or legal inference. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over "issues of fact" and "questions of fact" shall be the same exercised by it
prior to the adoption of this Article, and the Court may issue any remedial writs necessary to give it general supervision and control over the proceedings of the other courts. The Supreme Court also has jurisdiction to review, when authorized by law, direct appeals from a final order or decision of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

(2) Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals shall have such appellate jurisdiction as the General Assembly may prescribe.

(3) Superior Court. Except as otherwise provided by the General Assembly, the Superior Court shall have original general jurisdiction throughout the State. The Clerks of the Superior Court shall have such jurisdiction and powers as the General Assembly shall prescribe by general law uniformly applicable in every county of the State.

(4) District Courts; Magistrates. The General Assembly shall, by general law uniformly applicable in every local court district of the State, prescribe the jurisdiction and powers of the District Courts and Magistrates.

(5) Waiver. The General Assembly may by general law provide that the jurisdictional limits may be waived in civil cases.

(6) Appeals. The General Assembly shall by general law provide a proper system of appeals. Appeals from Magistrates shall be heard de novo, with the right of trial by jury as defined in this Constitution and the laws of this State.

**Sec. 13. Forms of action; rules of procedure.**

(1) Forms of action. There shall be in this State but one form of action for the enforcement or protection of private rights or the redress of private wrongs, which shall be denominated a civil action, and in which there shall be a right to have issues of fact tried before a jury. Every action prosecuted by the people of the State as a party against a person charged with a public offense, for the punishment thereof, shall be termed a criminal action.

(2) Rules of procedure. The Supreme Court shall have exclusive authority to make rules of procedure and practice for the Appellate Division. The General Assembly may make rules of procedure and practice for the Superior Court and District Court Divisions, and the General Assembly may delegate this authority to the Supreme Court. No rule of procedure or practice shall abridge substantive rights or abrogate or limit the right of trial by jury. If the General Assembly should delegate to the Supreme Court the rule-making power, the General Assembly may, nevertheless, alter, amend, or repeal any rule of procedure or practice adopted by the Supreme Court for the Superior Court or District Court Divisions.

**Sec. 14. Waiver of jury trial.**
In all issues of fact joined in any court, the parties in any civil case may waive the right to have the issues determined by a jury, in which case the finding of the judge upon the facts shall have the force and effect of a verdict by a jury.

**Sec. 15. Administration.**

The General Assembly shall provide for an administrative office of the courts to carry out the provisions of this Article.

**Sec. 16. Terms of office and election of Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, and Judges of the Superior Court.**

Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Court of Appeals, and regular Judges of the Superior Court shall be elected by the qualified voters and shall hold office for terms of eight years and until their successors are elected and qualified. Justices of the Supreme Court and Judges of the Court of Appeals shall be elected by the qualified voters of the State. Regular Judges of the Superior Court may be elected by the qualified voters of the State or by the voters of their respective districts, as the General Assembly may prescribe.

**Sec. 17. Removal of Judges, Magistrates and Clerks.**

(1) Removal of Judges by the General Assembly. Any Justice or Judge of the General Court of Justice may be removed from office for mental or physical incapacity by joint resolution of two-thirds of all the members of each house of the General Assembly. Any Justice or Judge against whom the General Assembly may be about to proceed shall receive notice thereof, accompanied by a copy of the causes alleged for his removal, at least 20 days before the day on which either house of the General Assembly shall act thereon. Removal from office by the General Assembly for any other cause shall be by impeachment.

(2) Additional method of removal of Judges. The General Assembly shall prescribe a procedure, in addition to impeachment and address set forth in this Section, for the removal of a Justice or Judge of the General Court of Justice for mental or physical incapacity interfering with the performance of his duties which is, or is likely to become, permanent, and for the censure and removal of a Justice or Judge of the General Court of Justice for wilful misconduct in office, wilful and persistent failure to perform his duties, habitual intemperance, conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude, or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute.

(3) Removal of Magistrates. The General Assembly shall provide by general law for the removal of Magistrates for misconduct or mental or physical incapacity.
(4) Removal of Clerks. Any Clerk of the Superior Court may be removed from office for misconduct or mental or physical incapacity by the senior regular resident Superior Court Judge serving the county. Any Clerk against whom proceedings are instituted shall receive written notice of the charges against him at least 10 days before the hearing upon the charges. Any Clerk so removed from office shall be entitled to an appeal as provided by law.

**Sec. 18. District Attorney and Prosecutorial Districts.**

(1) District Attorneys. The General Assembly shall, from time to time, divide the State into a convenient number of prosecutorial districts, for each of which a District Attorney shall be chosen for a term of four years by the qualified voters thereof, at the same time and places as members of the General Assembly are elected. Only persons duly authorized to practice law in the courts of this State shall be eligible for election or appointment as a District Attorney. The District Attorney shall advise the officers of justice in his district, be responsible for the prosecution on behalf of the State of all criminal actions in the Superior Courts of his district, perform such duties related to appeals therefrom as the Attorney General may require, and perform such other duties as the General Assembly may prescribe.

(2) Prosecution in District Court Division. Criminal actions in the District Court Division shall be prosecuted in such manner as the General Assembly may prescribe by general law uniformly applicable in every local court district of the State.

**Sec. 19. Vacancies.**

Unless otherwise provided in this Article, all vacancies occurring in the offices provided for by this Article shall be filled by appointment of the Governor, and the appointees shall hold their places until the next election for members of the General Assembly that is held more than 60 days after the vacancy occurs, when elections shall be held to fill the offices. When the unexpired term of any of the offices named in this Article of the Constitution in which a vacancy has occurred, and in which it is herein provided that the Governor shall fill the vacancy, expires on the first day of January succeeding the next election for members of the General Assembly, the Governor shall appoint to fill that vacancy for the unexpired term of the office. If any person elected or appointed to any of these offices shall fail to qualify, the office shall be appointed to, held and filled as provided in case of vacancies occurring therein. All incumbents of these offices shall hold until their successors are qualified.

**Sec. 20. Revenues and expenses of the judicial department.**

The General Assembly shall provide for the establishment of a schedule of court fees and costs which shall be uniform throughout the State within each division of the General Court of Justice. The operating expenses of the judicial department, other than compensation to process servers and other locally paid non-judicial officers, shall be paid from State funds.
Sec. 21. Fees, salaries, and emoluments.

The General Assembly shall prescribe and regulate the fees, salaries, and emoluments of all officers provided for in this Article, but the salaries of Judges shall not be diminished during their continuance in office. In no case shall the compensation of any Judge or Magistrate be dependent upon his decision or upon the collection of costs.

Sec. 22. Qualification of Justices and Judges.

Only persons duly authorized to practice law in the courts of this State shall be eligible for election or appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Judge of the Superior Court, or Judge of District Court. This section shall not apply to persons elected to or serving in such capacities on or before January 1, 1981.
Section 1. No capitation tax to be levied.

No poll or capitation tax shall be levied by the General Assembly or by any county, city or town, or other taxing unit.

Sec. 2. State and local taxation.

(1) Power of taxation. The power of taxation shall be exercised in a just and equitable manner, for public purposes only, and shall never be surrendered, suspended, or contracted away.

(2) Classification. Only the General Assembly shall have the power to classify property for taxation, which power shall be exercised only on a State-wide basis and shall not be delegated. No class of property shall be taxed except by uniform rule, and every classification shall be made by general law uniformly applicable in every county, city and town, and other unit of local government.

(3) Exemptions. Property belonging to the State, counties, and municipal corporations shall be exempt from taxation. The General Assembly may exempt cemeteries and property held for educational, scientific, literary, cultural, charitable, or religious purposes, and, to a value not exceeding $300, any personal property. The General Assembly may exempt from taxation not exceeding $1,000 in value of property held and used as the place of residence of the owner. Every exemption shall be on a State-wide basis and shall be made by general law uniformly applicable in every county, city and town, and other unit of local government. No taxing authority other than the General Assembly may grant exemptions, and the General Assembly shall not delegate the powers accorded to it by this subsection.

(4) Special tax areas. Subject to the limitations imposed by Section 4, the General Assembly may enact general laws authorizing the governing body of any county, city, or town to define territorial areas and to levy taxes within those areas, in addition to those levied throughout the county, city, or town, in order to finance, provide, or maintain services, facilities, and functions in addition to or to a greater extent than those financed, provided, or maintained for the entire
ARTICLE V

(5) Purposes of property tax. The General Assembly shall not authorize any county, city or town, special district, or other unit of local government to levy taxes on property, except for purposes authorized by general law uniformly applicable throughout the State, unless the tax is approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the unit who vote thereon.

(6) Income tax. The rate of tax on incomes shall not in any case exceed ten percent, and there shall be allowed personal exemptions and deductions so that only net incomes are taxed.

(7) Contracts. The General Assembly may enact laws whereby the State, any county, city or town, and any other public corporation may contract with and appropriate money to any person, association, or corporation for the accomplishment of public purposes only.

Sec. 3. Limitations upon the increase of State debt.

(1) Authorized purposes; two-thirds limitation. The General Assembly shall have no power to contract debts secured by a pledge of the faith and credit of the State, unless approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the State who vote thereon, except for the following purposes:

(a) to fund or refund a valid existing debt;

(b) to supply an unforeseen deficiency in the revenue;

(c) to borrow in anticipation of the collection of taxes due and payable within the current fiscal year to an amount not exceeding 50 per cent of such taxes;

(d) to suppress riots or insurrections, or to repel invasions;

(e) to meet emergencies immediately threatening the public health or safety, as conclusively determined in writing by the Governor;

(f) for any other lawful purpose, to the extent of two-thirds of the amount by which the State's outstanding indebtedness shall have been reduced during the next preceding biennium.

(2) Gift or loan of credit regulated. The General Assembly shall have no power to give or lend the credit of the State in aid of any person, association, or corporation, except a corporation in which the State has a controlling interest, unless the subject is submitted to a direct vote of the people of the State, and is approved by a majority of the qualified voters who vote thereon.

(3) Definitions. A debt is incurred within the meaning of this Section when the State borrows
money. A pledge of the faith and credit within the meaning of this Section is a pledge of the taxing power. A loan of credit within the meaning of this Section occurs when the State exchanges its obligations with or in any way guarantees the debts of an individual, association, or private corporation.

(4) Certain debts barred. The General Assembly shall never assume or pay any debt or obligation, express or implied, incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States. Neither shall the General Assembly assume or pay any debt or bond incurred or issued by authority of the Convention of 1868, the special session of the General Assembly of 1868, or the General Assemblies of 1868-69 and 1869-70, unless the subject is submitted to the people of the State and is approved by a majority of all the qualified voters at a referendum held for that sole purpose.

(5) Outstanding debt. Except as provided in subsection (4), nothing in this Section shall be construed to invalidate or impair the obligation of any bond, note, or other evidence of indebtedness outstanding or authorized for issue as of July 1, 1973.

Sec. 4. Limitations upon the increase of local government debt.

(1) Regulation of borrowing and debt. The General Assembly shall enact general laws relating to the borrowing of money secured by a pledge of the faith and credit and the contracting of other debts by counties, cities and towns, special districts, and other units, authorities, and agencies of local government.

(2) Authorized purposes; two-thirds limitation. The General Assembly shall have no power to authorize any county, city or town, special district, or other unit of local government to contract debts secured by a pledge of its faith and credit unless approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the unit who vote thereon, except for the following purposes:

(a) to fund or refund a valid existing debt;

(b) to supply an unforseen deficiency in the revenue;

(c) to borrow in anticipation of the collection of taxes due and payable within the current fiscal year to an amount not exceeding 50 per cent of such taxes;

(d) to suppress riots or insurrections;

(e) to meet emergencies immediately threatening the public health or safety, as conclusively determined in writing by the Governor;
(f) for purposes authorized by general laws uniformly applicable throughout the State, to the extent of two-thirds of the amount by which the unit's outstanding indebtedness shall have been reduced during the next preceding fiscal year.

(3) Gift or loan of credit regulated. No county, city or town, special district, or other unit of local government shall give or lend its credit in aid of any person, association, or corporation, except for public purposes as authorized by general law, and unless approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the unit who vote thereon.

(4) Certain debts barred. No county, city or town, or other unit of local government shall assume or pay any debt or the interest thereon contracted directly or indirectly in aid or support of rebellion or insurrection against the United States.

(5) Definitions. A debt is incurred within the meaning of this Section when a county, city or town, special district, or other unit, authority, or agency of local government borrows money. A pledge of faith and credit within the meaning of this Section is a pledge of the taxing power. A loan of credit within the meaning of this Section occurs when a county, city or town, special district, or other unit, authority, or agency of local government exchanges its obligations with or in any way guarantees the debts of an individual, association, or private corporation.

(6) Outstanding debt. Except as provided in subsection (4), nothing in this Section shall be construed to invalidate or impair the obligation of any bond, note, or other evidence of indebtedness outstanding or authorized for issue as of July 1, 1973.

**Sec. 5. Acts levying taxes to state objects.**

Every act of the General Assembly levying a tax shall state the special object to which it is to be applied, and it shall be applied to no other purpose.

**Sec. 6. Inviolability of sinking funds and retirement funds.**

(1) Sinking funds. The General Assembly shall not use or authorize to be used any part of the amount of any sinking fund for any purpose other than the retirement of the bonds for which the sinking fund has been created, except that these funds may be invested as authorized by law.

(2) Retirement funds. Neither the General Assembly nor any public officer, employee, or agency shall use or authorize to be used any part of the funds of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System or the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System for any purpose other than retirement system benefits and purposes, administrative expenses, and refunds; except that retirement system funds may be invested as authorized by law, subject to the investment limitation that the funds of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System
Article V

and the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System shall not be applied, diverted, loaned to, or used by the State, any State agency, State officer, public officer, or public employee.

Sec. 7. Drawing public money.

(1) State treasury. No money shall be drawn from the State treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law, and an accurate account of the receipts and expenditures of State funds shall be published annually.

(2) Local treasury. No money shall be drawn from the treasury of any county, city or town, or other unit of local government except by authority of law.

Sec. 8. Health care facilities.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Constitution, the General Assembly may enact general laws to authorize the State, counties, cities or towns, and other State and local governmental entities to issue revenue bonds to finance or refinance for any such governmental entity or any nonprofit private corporation, regardless of any church or religious relationship, the cost of acquiring, constructing, and financing health care facility projects to be operated to serve and benefit the public; provided, no cost incurred earlier than two years prior to the effective date of this section shall be refinanced. Such bonds shall be payable from the revenues, gross or net, of any such projects and any other health care facilities of any such governmental entity or nonprofit private corporation pledged therefor; shall not be secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit, or deemed to create an indebtedness requiring voter approval of any governmental entity; and may be secured by an agreement which may provide for the conveyance of title of, with or without consideration, any such project or facilities to the governmental entity or nonprofit private corporation. The power of eminent domain shall not be used pursuant hereto for nonprofit private corporations.

Sec. 9. Capital projects for industry.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, the General Assembly may enact general laws to authorize counties to create authorities to issue revenue bonds to finance, but not to refinance, the cost of capital projects consisting of industrial, manufacturing and pollution control facilities for industry and pollution control facilities for public utilities, and to refund such bonds.

In no event shall such revenue bonds be secured by or payable from any public moneys whatsoever, but such revenue bonds shall be secured by and payable only from revenues or property derived from private parties. All such capital projects and all transactions therefor shall be subject to taxation to the extent such projects and transactions would be subject to
ARTICLE V

The power of eminent domain shall not be exercised to provide any property for any such capital project.

Sec. 10. Joint ownership of generation and transmission facilities.

In addition to other powers conferred upon them by law, municipalities owning or operating facilities for the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power and energy and joint agencies formed by such municipalities for the purpose of owning or operating facilities for the generation and transmission of electric power and energy (each, respectively, "a unit of municipal government") may jointly or severally own, operate and maintain works, plants and facilities, within or without the State, for the generation and transmission of electric power and energy, or both, with any person, firm, association or corporation, public or private, engaged in the generation, transmission or distribution of electric power and energy for resale (each, respectively, "a co-owner") within this State or any state contiguous to this State, and may enter into and carry out agreements with respect to such jointly owned facilities. For the purpose of financing its share of the cost of any such jointly owned electric generation or transmission facilities, a unit of municipal government may issue its revenue bonds in the manner prescribed by the General Assembly, payable as to both principal and interest solely from and secured by a lien and charge on all or any part of the revenue derived, or to be derived, by such unit of municipal government from the ownership and operation of its electric facilities; provided, however, that no unit of municipal government shall be liable, either jointly or severally, for any acts, omissions or obligations of any co-owner, nor shall any money or property of any unit of municipal government be credited or otherwise applied to the account of any co-owner or be charged with any debt, lien or mortgage as a result of any debt or obligation of any co-owner.

Sec. 11. Capital projects for agriculture.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution the General Assembly may enact general laws to authorize the creation of an agency to issue revenue bonds to finance the cost of capital projects consisting of agricultural facilities, and to refund such bonds.

In no event shall such revenue bonds be secured by or payable from any public moneys whatsoever, but such revenue bonds shall be secured by and payable only from revenues or property derived from private parties. All such capital projects and all transactions therefor shall be subject to taxation to the extent such projects and transactions would be subject to taxation if no public body were involved therewith; provided, however, that the General Assembly may provide that the interest on such revenue bonds shall be exempt from income taxes within the State.
The power of eminent domain shall not be exercised to provide any property for any such capital project.

**Sec. 12. Higher Education Facilities.**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Constitution, the General Assembly may enact general laws to authorize the State or any State entity to issue revenue bonds to finance and refinance the cost of acquiring, constructing, and financing higher education facilities to be operated to serve and benefit the public for any nonprofit private corporation, regardless of any church or religious relationship provided no cost incurred earlier than five years prior to the effective date of this section shall be refinanced. Such bonds shall be payable from any revenues or assets of any such nonprofit private corporation pledged therefor, shall not be secured by a pledge of the full faith and credit of the State or such State entity or deemed to create an indebtedness requiring voter approval of the State or such entity, and, where the title to such facilities is vested in the State or any State entity, may be secured by an agreement which may provide for the conveyance of title to, with or without consideration, such facilities to the nonprofit private corporation. The power of eminent domain shall not be used pursuant hereto.

**Sec. 13. Seaport and airport facilities.**

(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, the General Assembly may enact general laws to grant to the State, counties, municipalities, and other State and local governmental entities all powers useful in connection with the development of new and existing seaports and airports, and to authorize such public bodies:

(a) to acquire, construct, own, own jointly with public and private parties, lease as lessee, mortgage, sell, lease as lessor, or otherwise dispose of lands and facilities and improvements, including undivided interest therein;

(b) to finance and refinance for public and private parties seaport and airport facilities and improvements which relate to, develop or further waterborne or airborne commerce and cargo and passenger traffic, including commercial, industrial, manufacturing, processing, mining, transportation, distribution, storage, marine, aviation and environmental facilities and improvements; and

(c) to secure any such financing or refinancing by all or any portion of their revenues, income or assets or other available monies associated with any of their seaport or airport facilities and with the facilities and improvements to be financed or refinanced, and by foreclosable liens on all or any part of their properties associated with any of their seaport or airport facilities and with the facilities and improvements to be financed or refinanced, but in no event to create a debt secured by a pledge of the faith and credit of the State or any other public body in the
State.

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ARTICLE VI

SUFFRAGE AND ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE

Section 1. Who may vote.

Every person born in the United States and every person who has been naturalized, 18 years of age, and possessing the qualifications set out in this Article, shall be entitled to vote at any election by the people of the State, except as herein otherwise provided.

Sec. 2. Qualifications of voter.

(1) Residence period for State elections. Any person who has resided in the State of North Carolina for one year and in the precinct, ward, or other election district for 30 days next preceding an election, and possesses the other qualifications set out in this Article, shall be entitled to vote at any election held in this State. Removal from one precinct, ward, or other election district to another in this State shall not operate to deprive any person of the right to vote in the precinct, ward, or other election district from which that person has removed until 30 days after the removal.

(2) Residence period for presidential elections. The General Assembly may reduce the time of residence for persons voting in presidential elections. A person made eligible by reason of a reduction in time of residence shall possess the other qualifications set out in this Article, shall only be entitled to vote for President and Vice President of the United States or for electors for President and Vice President, and shall not thereby become eligible to hold office in this State.

(3) Disqualification of felon. No person adjudged guilty of a felony against this State or the United States, or adjudged guilty of a felony in another state that also would be a felony if it had been committed in this State, shall be permitted to vote unless that person shall be first restored to the rights of citizenship in the manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 3. Registration.

Every person offering to vote shall be at the time legally registered as a voter as herein
prescribed and in the manner provided by law. The General Assembly shall enact general laws governing the registration of voters.

**Sec. 4. Qualification for registration.**

Every person presenting himself for registration shall be able to read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language.

**Sec. 5. Elections by people and General Assembly.**

All elections by the people shall be by ballot, and all elections by the General Assembly shall be viva voce. A contested election for any office established by Article III of this Constitution shall be determined by joint ballot of both houses of the General Assembly in the manner prescribed by law.

**Sec. 6. Eligibility to elective office.**

Every qualified voter in North Carolina who is 21 years of age, except as in this Constitution disqualified, shall be eligible for election by the people to office.

**Sec. 7. Oath.**

Before entering upon the duties of an office, a person elected or appointed to the office shall take and subscribe the following oath:

"I, ........................., do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as .............................., so help me God."

**Sec. 8. Disqualifications for office.**

The following persons shall be disqualified for office:

First, any person who shall deny the being of Almighty God.

Second, with respect to any office that is filled by election by the people, any person who is not qualified to vote in an election for that office.

Third, any person who has been adjudged guilty of treason or any other felony against this State or the United States, or any person who has been adjudged guilty of a felony in another state
that also would be a felony if it had been committed in this State, or any person who has been adjudged guilty of corruption or malpractice in any office, or any person who has been removed by impeachment from any office, and who has not been restored to the rights of citizenship in the manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 9. Dual office holding.

(1) Prohibitions. It is salutary that the responsibilities of self-government be widely shared among the citizens of the State and that the potential abuse of authority inherent in the holding of multiple offices by an individual be avoided. Therefore, no person who holds any office or place of trust or profit under the United States or any department thereof, or under any other state or government, shall be eligible to hold any office in this State that is filled by election by the people. No person shall hold concurrently any two offices in this State that are filled by election of the people. No person shall hold concurrently any two or more appointive offices or places of trust or profit, or any combination of elective and appointive offices or places of trust or profit, except as the General Assembly shall provide by general law.

(2) Exceptions. The provisions of this Section shall not prohibit any officer of the military forces of the State or of the United States not on active duty for an extensive period of time, any notary public, or any delegate to a Convention of the People from holding concurrently another office or place of trust or profit under this State or the United States or any department thereof.

Sec. 10. Continuation in office.

In the absence of any contrary provision, all officers in this State, whether appointed or elected, shall hold their positions until other appointments are made or, if the offices are elective, until their successors are chosen and qualified.
ARTICLE VII

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Section 1. General Assembly to provide for local government.

The General Assembly shall provide for the organization and government and the fixing of boundaries of counties, cities and towns, and other governmental subdivisions, and, except as otherwise prohibited by this Constitution, may give such powers and duties to counties, cities and towns, and other governmental subdivisions as it may deem advisable.

The General Assembly shall not incorporate as a city or town, nor shall it authorize to be incorporated as a city or town, any territory lying within one mile of the corporate limits of any other city or town having a population of 5,000 or more according to the most recent decennial census of population taken by order of Congress, or lying within three miles of the corporate limits of any other city or town having a population of 10,000 or more according to the most recent decennial census of population taken by order of Congress, or lying within four miles of the corporate limits of any other city or town having a population of 25,000 or more according to the most recent decennial census of population taken by order of Congress, or lying within five miles of the corporate limits of any other city or town having a population of 50,000 or more according to the most recent decennial census of population taken by order of Congress. Notwithstanding the foregoing limitations, the General Assembly may incorporate a city or town by an act adopted by vote of three-fifths of all the members of each house.

Sec. 2. Sheriffs.

In each county a Sheriff shall be elected by the qualified voters thereof at the same time and places as members of the General Assembly are elected and shall hold his office for a period of four years, subject to removal for cause as provided by law.

Sec. 3. Merged or consolidated counties.
Any unit of local government formed by the merger or consolidation of a county or counties and the cities and towns therein shall be deemed both a county and a city for the purposes of this Constitution, and may exercise any authority conferred by law on counties, or on cities and towns, or both, as the General Assembly may provide.

ARTICLE VIII

CORPORATIONS

Section 1. Corporate charters.

No corporation shall be created, nor shall its charter be extended, altered, or amended by special act, except corporations for charitable, educational, penal, or reformatory purposes that are to be and remain under the patronage and control of the State; but the General Assembly shall provide by general laws for the chartering, organization, and powers of all corporations, and for the amending, extending, and forfeiture of all charters, except those above permitted by special act. All such general acts may be altered from time to time or repealed. The General Assembly may at any time by special act repeal the charter of any corporation.

Sec. 2. Corporations defined.

The term "corporation" as used in this Section shall be construed to include all associations and joint-stock companies having any of the powers and privileges of corporations not possessed by individuals or partnerships. All corporations shall have the right to sue and shall be subject to be sued in all courts, in like cases as natural persons.

ARTICLE IX

EDUCATION

Section 1. Education encouraged.

Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, libraries, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

Sec. 2. Uniform system of schools.

(1) General and uniform system: term. The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at
least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.

(2) Local responsibility. The General Assembly may assign to units of local government such responsibility for the financial support of the free public schools as it may deem appropriate. The governing boards of units of local government with financial responsibility for public education may use local revenues to add to or supplement any public school or post-secondary school program.

Sec. 3. School attendance.

The General Assembly shall provide that every child of appropriate age and of sufficient mental and physical ability shall attend the public schools, unless educated by other means.

Sec. 4. State Board of Education.

(1) Board. The State Board of Education shall consist of the Lieutenant Governor, the Treasurer, and eleven members appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly in joint session. The General Assembly shall divide the State into eight educational districts. Of the appointive members of the Board, one shall be appointed from each of the eight educational districts and three shall be appointed from the State at large. Appointments shall be for overlapping terms of eight years. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be made by the Governor for the unexpired terms and shall not be subject to confirmation.

(2) Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall be the secretary and chief administrative officer of the State Board of Education.

Sec. 5. Powers and duties of Board.

The State Board of Education shall supervise and administer the free public school system and the educational funds provided for its support, except the funds mentioned in Section 7 of this Article, and shall make all needed rules and regulations in relation thereto, subject to laws enacted by the General Assembly.

Sec. 6. State school fund.

The proceeds of all lands that have been or hereafter may be granted by the United States to this State, and not otherwise appropriated by this State or the United States; all moneys, stocks, bonds, and other property belonging to the State for purposes of public education; the net proceeds of all sales of the swamp lands belonging to the State; and all other grants, gifts, and devises that have been or hereafter may be made to the State, and not otherwise appropriated by the State or by the terms of the grant, gift, or devise, shall be paid into the State Treasury.
and, together with so much of the revenue of the State as may be set apart for that purpose, shall be faithfully appropriated and used exclusively for establishing and maintaining a uniform system of free public schools.

Sec. 7. County school fund.

All moneys, stocks, bonds, and other property belonging to a county school fund, and the clear proceeds of all penalties and forfeitures and of all fines collected in the several counties for any breach of the penal laws of the State, shall belong to and remain in the several counties, and shall be faithfully appropriated and used exclusively for maintaining free public schools.

Sec. 8. Higher education.

The General Assembly shall maintain a public system of higher education, comprising The University of North Carolina and such other institutions of higher education as the General Assembly may deem wise. The General Assembly shall provide for the selection of trustees of The University of North Carolina and of the other institutions of higher education, in whom shall be vested all the privileges, rights, franchises, and endowments heretofore granted to or conferred upon the trustees of these institutions. The General Assembly may enact laws necessary and expedient for the maintenance and management of The University of North Carolina and the other public institutions of higher education.

Sec. 9. Benefits of public institutions of higher education.

The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense.

Sec. 10. Escheats.

(1) Escheats prior to July 1, 1971. All property that prior to July 1, 1971, accrued to the State from escheats, unclaimed dividends, or distributive shares of the estates of deceased persons shall be appropriated to the use of The University of North Carolina.

(2) Escheats after June 30, 1971. All property that, after June 30, 1971, shall accrue to the State from escheats, unclaimed dividends, or distributive shares of the estates of deceased persons shall be used to aid worthy and needy students who are residents of this State and are enrolled in public institutions of higher education in this State. The method, amount, and type of distribution shall be prescribed by law.
HOMESTEADS AND EXEMPTIONS

Section 1. Personal property exemptions.

The personal property of any resident of this State, to a value fixed by the General Assembly but not less than $500, to be selected by the resident, is exempted from sale under execution or other final process of any court, issued for the collection of any debt.

Sec. 2. Homestead exemptions.

(1) Exemption from sale; exceptions. Every homestead and the dwellings and buildings used therewith, to a value fixed by the General Assembly but not less than $1,000, to be selected by the owner thereof, or in lieu thereof, at the option of the owner, any lot in a city or town with the dwellings and buildings used thereon, and to the same value, owned and occupied by a resident of the State, shall be exempt from sale under execution or other final process obtained on any debt. But no property shall be exempt from sale for taxes, or for payment of obligations contracted for its purchase.

(2) Exemption for benefit of children. The homestead, after the death of the owner thereof, shall be exempt from the payment of any debt during the minority of the owner's children, or any of them.

(3) Exemption for benefit of surviving spouse. If the owner of a homestead dies, leaving a surviving spouse but no minor children, the homestead shall be exempt from the debts of the owner, and the rents and profits thereof shall inure to the benefit of the surviving spouse until he or she remarries, unless the surviving spouse is the owner of a separate homestead.

(4) Conveyance of homestead. Nothing contained in this Article shall operate to prevent the owner of a homestead from disposing of it by deed, but no deed made by a married owner of a homestead shall be valid without the signature and acknowledgement of his or her spouse.

Sec. 3. Mechanics’ and laborers’ liens.

The General Assembly shall provide by proper legislation for giving to mechanics and laborers an adequate lien on the subject-matter of their labor. The provisions of Sections 1 and 2 of this Article shall not be so construed as to prevent a laborer’s lien for work done and performed for the person claiming the exemption or a mechanic's lien for work done on the premises.

Sec. 4. Property of married women secured to them.

The real and personal property of any female in this State acquired before marriage, and all
property, real and personal, to which she may, after marriage, become in any manner entitled, shall be and remain the sole and separate estate and property of such female, and shall not be liable for any debts, obligations, or engagements of her husband, and may be devised and bequeathed and conveyed by her, subject to such regulations and limitations as the General Assembly may prescribe. Every married woman may exercise powers of attorney conferred upon her by her husband, including the power to execute and acknowledge deeds to property owned by herself and her husband or by her husband.

Sec. 5. Insurance.

A person may insure his or her own life for the sole use and benefit of his or her spouse or children or both, and upon his or her death the proceeds from the insurance shall be paid to or for the benefit of the spouse or children or both, or to a guardian, free from all claims of the representatives or creditors of the insured or his or her estate. Any insurance policy which insures the life of a person for the sole use and benefit of that person's spouse or children or both shall not be subject to the claims of creditors of the insured during his or her lifetime, whether or not the policy reserves to the insured during his or her lifetime any or all rights provided for by the policy and whether or not the policy proceeds are payable to the estate of the insured in the event the beneficiary or beneficiaries predecease the insured.

ARTICLE XI

PUNISHMENTS, CORRECTIONS, AND CHARITIES

Section 1. Punishments.

The following punishments only shall be known to the laws of this State: death, imprisonment, fines, suspension of a jail or prison term with or without conditions, restitution, community service, restraints on liberty, work programs, removal from office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust, or profit under this State. (1995, c. 429, s. 2.)

Sec. 2. Death punishment.

The object of punishments being not only to satisfy justice, but also to reform the offender and thus prevent crime, murder, arson, burglary, and rape, and these only, may be punishable with death, if the General Assembly shall so enact.

Sec. 3. Charitable and correctional institutions and agencies.

Such charitable, benevolent, penal, and correctional institutions and agencies as the needs of humanity and the public good may require shall be established and operated by the State under such organization and in such manner as the General Assembly may prescribe.
ARTICLE VII

Sec. 4. Welfare policy; board of public welfare.

Beneficent provision for the poor, the unfortunate, and the orphan is one of the first duties of a civilized and a Christian state. Therefore the General Assembly shall provide for and define the duties of a board of public welfare.

ARTICLE XII

MILITARY FORCES

Section 1. Governor is Commander in Chief.

The Governor shall be Commander in Chief of the military forces of the State and may call out those forces to execute the law, suppress riots and insurrections, and repel invasion.

ARTICLE XIII

CONVENTIONS; CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND REVISION

Section 1. Convention of the People.

No Convention of the People of this State shall ever be called unless by the concurrence of two-thirds of all the members of each house of the General Assembly, and unless the proposition "Convention or No Convention" is first submitted to the qualified voters of the State at the time and in the manner prescribed by the General Assembly. If a majority of the votes cast upon the proposition are in favor of a Convention, it shall assemble on the day prescribed by the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall, in the act submitting the convention proposition, propose limitations upon the authority of the Convention; and if a majority of the votes cast upon the proposition are in favor of a Convention, those limitations shall become binding upon the Convention. Delegates to the Convention shall be elected by the qualified voters at the time and in the manner prescribed in the act of submission. The Convention shall consist of a number of delegates equal to the membership of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly that submits the convention proposition and the delegates shall be apportioned as is the House of Representatives. A Convention shall adopt no ordinance not necessary to the purpose for which the Convention has been called.

Sec. 2. Power to revise or amend Constitution reserved to people.

The people of this State reserve the power to amend this Constitution and to adopt a new or revised Constitution. This power may be exercised by either of the methods set out hereinafter in this Article, but in no other way.
Sec. 3. Revision or amendment by Convention of the People.

A Convention of the People of this State may be called pursuant to Section 1 of this Article to propose a new or revised Constitution or to propose amendments to this Constitution. Every new or revised Constitution and every constitutional amendment adopted by a Convention shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the State at the time and in the manner prescribed by the Convention. If a majority of the votes cast thereon are in favor of ratification of the new or revised Constitution or the constitutional amendment or amendments, it or they shall become effective January first next after ratification by the qualified voters unless a different effective date is prescribed by the Convention.

Sec. 4. Revision or amendment by legislative initiation.

A proposal of a new or revised Constitution or an amendment or amendments to this Constitution may be initiated by the General Assembly, but only if three-fifths of all the members of each house shall adopt an act submitting the proposal to the qualified voters of the State for their ratification or rejection. The proposal shall be submitted at the time and in the manner prescribed by the General Assembly. If a majority of the votes cast thereon are in favor of the proposed new or revised Constitution or constitutional amendment or amendments, it or they shall become effective January first next after ratification by the voters unless a different effective date is prescribed in the act submitting the proposal or proposals to the qualified voters.

ARTICLE XIV

MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1. Seat of government.

The permanent seat of government of this State shall be at the City of Raleigh.

Sec. 2. State boundaries.

The limits and boundaries of the State shall be and remain as they now are.

Sec. 3. General laws defined.

Whenever the General Assembly is directed or authorized by this Constitution to enact general laws, or general laws uniformly applicable throughout the State, or general laws uniformly applicable in every county, city and town, and other unit of local government, or in every local
ARTICLE VII

court district, no special or local act shall be enacted concerning the subject matter directed or
authorized to be accomplished by general or uniformly applicable laws, and every amendment
or repeal of any law relating to such subject matter shall also be general and uniform in its effect
throughout the State. General laws may be enacted for classes defined by population or other
criteria. General laws uniformly applicable throughout the State shall be made applicable
without classification or exception in every unit of local government of like kind, such as every
county, or every city and town, but need not be made applicable in every unit of local
government in the State. General laws uniformly applicable in every county, city and town, and
other unit of local government, or in every local court district, shall be made applicable without
classification or exception in every unit of local government, or in every local court district, as
the case may be. The General Assembly may at any time repeal any special, local, or private act.

Sec. 4. Continuity of laws; protection of office holders.

The laws of North Carolina not in conflict with this Constitution shall continue in force until
lawfully altered. Except as otherwise specifically provided, the adoption of this Constitution
shall not have the effect of vacating any office or term of office now filled or held by virtue of
any election or appointment made under the prior Constitution of North Carolina and the laws
of the State enacted pursuant thereto.

Sec. 5. Conservation of natural resources.

It shall be the policy of this State to conserve and protect its lands and waters for the benefit of
all its citizenry, and to this end it shall be a proper function of the State of North Carolina and
its political subdivisions to acquire and preserve park, recreational, and scenic areas, to control
and limit the pollution of our air and water, to control excessive noise, and in every other
appropriate way to preserve as a part of the common heritage of this State its forests, wetlands,
estuaries, beaches, historical sites, openlands, and places of beauty.

To accomplish the aforementioned public purposes, the State and its counties, cities and towns,
and other units of local government may acquire by purchase or gift properties or interests in
properties which shall, upon their special dedication to and acceptance by resolution adopted
by a vote of three-fifths of the members of each house of the General Assembly for those public
purposes, constitute part of the "State Nature and Historic Preserve," and which shall not be
used for other purposes except as authorized by law enacted by a vote of three-fifths of the
members of each house of the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall prescribe by
general law the conditions and procedures under which such properties or interests therein
shall be dedicated for the aforementioned public purposes.

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