

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

SESSION LAW 2009-398  
HOUSE BILL 1077

AN ACT TO AMEND THE VENUE RULES AND THE AUTHORITY OF MAGISTRATES FOR MUNICIPALITIES LYING IN FOUR OR MORE COUNTIES, EACH OF WHICH IS IN A DIFFERENT JUDICIAL DISTRICT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 7A-199(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) A district court judge sitting at a seat of court described in this section may, in criminal cases, conduct preliminary hearings and try misdemeanors arising within the corporate limits of the municipality plus the territory embraced within a distance of one mile in all directions therefrom.

If the corporate limits of the municipality extend into two or more counties, each of which is in a separate district court district, a district court judge assigned to sit at the seat of court has the same authority over criminal cases arising in the municipality and the territory embraced within a distance of one mile in all directions that he would have if the corporate limits of the municipality were solely located in a single district court district. Judges assigned to sit in such a municipality shall be assigned by the chief district court judge serving the district in which a majority of the voters of the municipality reside, but offenses arising in ~~the~~ a portion of the municipality in which ~~the~~ a minority of the voters reside shall not be disposed of in the municipality unless the chief district court judge for that district consents in writing to the disposition of criminal cases in the municipality. However, for charges brought by municipal law enforcement officers only, if the corporate limits of the municipality extend into four or more counties, each of which is in a separate district court district, offenses arising in a portion of the municipality in which a minority of the voters reside shall be disposed of in the portion of the municipality in which a majority of the voters reside without obtaining the consent of the chief district court judge for the district in which the offense occurred."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 7A-293 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 7A-293. Special authority of a magistrate assigned to a municipality located in more than one county of a district court district.**

A magistrate assigned to an incorporated municipality, the boundaries of which lie in more than one county of a district court district, may, in criminal matters, exercise the powers granted by G.S. 7A-273 as if the corporate limits plus the territory embraced within a distance of one mile in all directions therefrom were located wholly within the magistrate's county of residence. Appeals from a magistrate exercising the authority granted by this section shall be taken in the district court in the county in which the offense was committed. A magistrate exercising the special authority granted by this section shall transmit all records, reports, and monies collected to the clerk of the superior court of the county in which the offense was committed. In addition, if a magistrate is assigned to an incorporated municipality, the boundaries of which lie in two or more district court districts, the magistrate may exercise the powers described in this section as if ~~both~~ the counties were in the same district court district, if the clerks of superior court and the chief district court judges serving ~~both~~ the districts in which the municipality is located agree in writing that the exercise of this special authority would



promote the administration of justice in the municipality and in ~~both~~the districts. However, if a magistrate is assigned to an incorporated municipality, the boundaries of which lie in four or more counties, each of which is in a separate district court district, the magistrate may exercise the powers described in this section as if all the counties were in the same district court district, without the necessity of such an agreement between the clerks and judges of the affected counties, and the records, reports, and monies collected in connection with the exercise of that authority shall be transmitted to the clerk of the superior court district for the county in which the offense was committed."

**SECTION 3.** G.S. 15A-131(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, venue for probable cause hearings and trial proceedings in cases within the original jurisdiction of the superior court lies in the county where the charged offense occurred. ~~If~~Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, if the alleged offense is committed within the corporate limits of a municipality which is the seat of superior court and is located in more than one county, venue lies in the superior court which sits within that municipality, but upon timely objection of the defendant or the district attorney in the county in which the alleged offense occurred the case must be transferred to the county in which the alleged offense occurred. However, for charges brought by municipal law enforcement officers only, if the alleged offense is committed within the corporate limits of a municipality that extends into four or more counties, each of which is in a separate superior court district, offenses committed within the corporate limits of the municipality but in a superior court district other than the one for which the municipality is the seat of superior court shall be disposed of in the municipality with no allowance for objections by the defendant or the district attorney."

**SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2009, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2009.

s/ Walter H. Dalton  
President of the Senate

s/ William L. Wainwright  
Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives

s/ Beverly E. Perdue  
Governor

Approved 1:05 p.m. this 31<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2009