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Sponsors:

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April 7, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO DETER AND PUNISH PERSONS WHO MAKE FALSE OR FRAUDULENT CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT BY THE STATE AND TO PROVIDE REMEDIES IN THE FORM OF TREBLE DAMAGES AND CIVIL PENALTIES WHEN MONEY IS OBTAINED FROM THE STATE BY REASON OF SUCH CLAIMS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article to read:

"Article 52.

"False Claims Act.

"§ 1-605. Short title; purpose.

(a) This Article shall be known and may be cited as the False Claims Act.

(b) The purpose of this Article is to deter persons from knowingly causing or assisting in causing the State to pay claims that are false or fraudulent and to provide remedies in the form of treble damages and civil penalties when money is obtained from the State by reason of a false or fraudulent claim.

"§ 1-606. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(1) "Attorney General." – The Attorney General of North Carolina, or any deputy, assistant, or associate attorney general.

(2) "Claim." – Any request or demand, whether under a contract or otherwise, for money or property and whether or not the State has title to the money or property that (i) is presented to an officer, employee, or agent of the State or (ii) is made to a contractor, grantee, or other recipient, if the money or property is to be spent or used on the State's behalf or to advance a State program or interest and if the State government:

a. Provides or has provided any portion of the money or property that is requested or demanded; or

b. Will reimburse such contractor, grantee, or other recipient for any portion of the money or property which is requested or demanded.

A claim does not include requests or demands for money or property that the State has paid to an individual as compensation for State employment or as



1 an income subsidy with no restrictions on that individual's use of the money
2 or property.

3 (3) "Judiciary." – A justice or judge of the General Court of Justice or clerk of
4 court.

5 (4) "Knowing" and "knowingly." – Whenever a person, with respect to
6 information, does any of the following:

7 a. Has actual knowledge of the information.

8 b. Acts in deliberate ignorance of the truth or falsity of the information.

9 c. Acts in reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the information.

10 Proof of specific intent to defraud is not required.

11 (5) "Obligation" means an established duty, whether or not fixed, arising from
12 an express or implied contractual, grantor-grantee, or licensor-licensee
13 relationship, from a fee-based or similar relationship, from statute or
14 regulation, or from the retention of any overpayment.

15 (6) "Material" means having a natural tendency to influence, or be capable of
16 influencing, the payment or receipt of money or property.

17 (7) "Public employee," "public official," and "public employment" includes
18 federal, State, and local employees and officials.

19 (8) "Senior executive branch official." – The Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
20 member of the Council of State, or head of department as defined in
21 G.S. 143B-3.

22 **§ 1-607. False claims; acts subjecting persons to liability for treble damages; costs and**
23 **civil penalties; exceptions.**

24 (a) Liability. – Any person who commits any of the following acts shall be liable to the
25 State for three times the amount of damages that the State sustains because of the act of that
26 person. A person who commits any of the following acts also shall be liable to the State for the
27 costs of a civil action brought to recover any of those penalties or damages and shall be liable
28 to the State for a civil penalty of not less than five thousand five hundred dollars (\$5,500) and
29 not more than eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000) for each violation:

30 (1) Knowingly presents or causes to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for
31 payment or approval.

32 (2) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or
33 statement material to a false or fraudulent claim.

34 (3) Conspires to commit a violation of subdivision (1), (2), (4), (5), (6), or (7) of
35 this section.

36 (4) Has possession, custody, or control of property or money used or to be used
37 by the State and knowingly delivers or causes to be delivered less than all of
38 that money or property.

39 (5) Is authorized to make or deliver a document certifying receipt of property
40 used or to be used by the State and, intending to defraud the State, makes or
41 delivers the receipt without completely knowing that the information on the
42 receipt is true.

43 (6) Knowingly buys, or receives as a pledge of an obligation or debt, public
44 property from any officer or employee of the State who lawfully may not
45 sell or pledge the property.

46 (7) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or
47 statement material to an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to
48 the State, or knowingly conceals or knowingly and improperly avoids or
49 decreases an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the State.

50 (b) Damages Limitation. – Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this
51 section, the court may limit the damages assessed under subsection (a) of this section to not less

1 than two times the amount of damages that the State sustains because of the act of the person
2 described in that subsection and may assess no civil penalty if the court finds all of the
3 following:

- 4 (1) The person committing the violation furnished officials of the State who are
5 responsible for investigating false claims violations with all information
6 known to that person about the violation within 30 days after the date on
7 which the person first obtained the information.
- 8 (2) The person fully cooperated with any investigation of the violation by the
9 State.
- 10 (3) At the time the person furnished the State with information about the
11 violation, no criminal prosecution, civil action, or administrative action has
12 commenced with respect to the violation, and the person did not have actual
13 knowledge of the existence of an investigation into the violation.

14 (c) Exclusion. – This section does not apply to claims, records, or statements made
15 under Chapter 105 of the General Statutes.

16 **§ 1-608. Civil actions for false claims.**

17 (a) Responsibilities of the Attorney General. – The Attorney General diligently shall
18 investigate a violation under G.S. 1-607. If the Attorney General finds that a person has
19 violated or is violating G.S. 1-607, the Attorney General may bring a civil action under this
20 section against that person.

21 (b) Actions by Private Persons. – A person may bring a civil action for a violation of
22 G.S. 1-607 or under G.S. 108A-70.12 for the person and for the State, as follows:

- 23 (1) The action shall be brought in the name of the State, and the person bringing
24 the action shall be referred to as the qui tam plaintiff. Once filed, the action
25 may be dismissed voluntarily by the person bringing the action only if the
26 court and Attorney General have given written consent to the dismissal.
- 27 (2) A copy of the complaint and written disclosure of substantially all material
28 evidence and information the person possesses shall be served on the
29 Attorney General pursuant to applicable rules of the North Carolina Rules of
30 Civil Procedure. The complaint shall be filed in camera, shall remain under
31 seal for at least 120 days, and shall not be served on the defendant until the
32 court so orders. The State may elect to intervene and proceed with the action
33 within 120 days after it receives both the complaint and the material
34 evidence and information.
- 35 (3) The State may, for good cause shown, move the court for extensions of the
36 time during which the complaint remains under seal under subdivision (2) of
37 this subsection. Any such motions may be supported by affidavits or other
38 submissions in camera. The defendant shall not be required to respond to
39 any complaint filed under this section until 30 days after the complaint is
40 unsealed and served upon the defendant pursuant to the North Carolina
41 Rules of Civil Procedure.
- 42 (4) Before the expiration of the 120-day period or any extensions obtained under
43 subdivision (3) of this subsection, the State shall:
- 44 a. Proceed with the action, in which case the action shall be conducted
45 by the State; or
- 46 b. Notify the court that it declines to take over the action, in which case
47 the person bringing the action shall have the right to conduct the
48 action.
- 49 (5) When a person brings an action under this subsection, the federal False
50 Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729 et seq., or any similar provision of law in any
51 other state, no person other than the State may intervene or bring a related

1 action based on the facts underlying the pending action; provided, however,
2 that nothing in this subdivision prohibits a person from amending a pending
3 action in another jurisdiction to allege a claim under this subsection.

4 (c) The Attorney General may retain a portion of the damages recovered for a State
5 agency out of the proceeds of the action or settlement under this Article as reimbursement for
6 costs incurred by the Attorney General in investigating and bringing a civil action under this
7 Article, including reasonable attorneys' fees and investigative costs. Retained funds shall be
8 used by the Attorney General to carry out the provisions of this Article.

9 **"§ 1-609. Rights of the parties to qui tam actions.**

10 (a) If the State proceeds with an action under G.S. 1-608(b), it shall have the primary
11 responsibility for prosecuting the action and shall not be bound by an act of the qui tam
12 plaintiff. The qui tam plaintiff shall have the right to continue as a party to the action, subject to
13 the limitations set forth in subsections (b) through (e) of this section.

14 (b) The State may dismiss the action for good cause notwithstanding the objections of
15 the qui tam plaintiff if the qui tam plaintiff has been notified by the State of the filing of the
16 motion and the court has provided the qui tam plaintiff with an opportunity for a hearing on the
17 motion.

18 (c) The State may settle the action with the defendant, notwithstanding the objections of
19 the qui tam plaintiff, if the court determines, after a hearing, that the proposed settlement is fair,
20 adequate, and reasonable under all the circumstances. Upon a showing of good cause, the
21 hearing may be heard in camera.

22 (d) Upon a showing by the State that the qui tam plaintiff's unrestricted participation
23 during the course of the litigation would interfere with or unduly delay the State's prosecution
24 of the case or would be repetitious, irrelevant, or for purposes of harassment, the court may, in
25 its discretion, impose limitations on the person's participation, such as any of the following:

26 (1) Limiting the number of witnesses the qui tam plaintiff may call.

27 (2) Limiting the length of the testimony of those witnesses.

28 (3) Limiting the qui tam plaintiff's cross-examination of witnesses.

29 (4) Otherwise limiting the participation by the qui tam plaintiff in the litigation.

30 (e) Upon a showing by the defendant that the qui tam plaintiff's unrestricted
31 participation during the course of the litigation would be for purposes of harassment or would
32 cause the defendant undue burden or unnecessary expense, the court may limit the participation
33 by the qui tam plaintiff in the litigation.

34 (f) If the State elects not to proceed with the action, the qui tam plaintiff shall have the
35 right to conduct the action. If the State so requests, it shall be served with copies of all
36 pleadings filed in the action and shall be supplied with copies of all deposition transcripts at the
37 State's expense. When a qui tam plaintiff proceeds with the action, the court, without limiting
38 the status and rights of the qui tam plaintiff, may permit the State to intervene at a later date
39 upon a showing of good cause.

40 (g) Whether or not the State proceeds with the action, upon a showing by the State that
41 certain actions of discovery by the qui tam plaintiff would interfere with the State's
42 investigation or prosecution of a criminal or civil matter arising out of the same facts, the court
43 may stay such discovery for a period of not more than 120 days. Such a showing shall be
44 conducted in camera. The court may extend the 120-day period upon a further showing in
45 camera that the State has pursued the criminal or civil investigation or proceedings with
46 reasonable diligence and any proposed discovery in the civil action will interfere with the
47 ongoing criminal or civil investigations or proceedings.

48 (h) Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 1-608(b), the State may elect to pursue its
49 claim through any alternate remedy available to the State, including any administrative
50 proceeding to determine a civil money penalty. If any such alternate remedy is pursued in
51 another proceeding, the qui tam plaintiff shall have the same rights in that proceeding as the qui

1 tam plaintiff would have had if the action had continued under this section. Any finding of fact
2 or conclusion of law made in the other proceeding that has become final shall be conclusive on
3 all parties to an action under this section. For purposes of this subsection, a finding or
4 conclusion is final if it has been finally determined on appeal to the appropriate court of the
5 State, if all time for filing such an appeal with respect to the finding or conclusion has expired,
6 or if the finding or conclusion is not subject to judicial review.

7 **"§ 1-610. Award to qui tam plaintiff.**

8 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, if the State proceeds with an action
9 brought by a qui tam plaintiff under G.S. 1-608(b), the qui tam plaintiff shall receive at least
10 fifteen percent (15%) but not more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the proceeds of the action
11 or settlement of the claim, depending upon the extent to which the qui tam plaintiff
12 substantially contributed to the prosecution of the action.

13 (b) Where the action is one which the court finds to be based primarily on disclosures
14 of specific information, other than information provided by the qui tam plaintiff, relating to
15 allegations or transactions (i) in a criminal, civil, or administrative hearing at the State or
16 federal level, (ii) in a congressional, legislative, administrative, General Accounting Office, or
17 State Auditor's report, hearing, audit, or investigation, or (iii) from the news media, the court
18 may award such sums as it considers appropriate, but in no case more than ten percent (10%) of
19 the proceeds, taking into account the significance of the information and the role of the qui tam
20 plaintiff in advancing the case to litigation.

21 (c) Any payment to a qui tam plaintiff under subsection (a) or (b) of this section shall
22 be made from the proceeds.

23 (d) The qui tam plaintiff also shall receive an amount for reasonable expenses that the
24 court finds to have been necessarily incurred, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. All such
25 expenses, fees, and costs shall be awarded against the defendant.

26 (e) If the State does not proceed with an action under this Article, the qui tam plaintiff
27 shall receive an amount which the court decides is reasonable for collecting the civil penalty
28 and damages. The amount shall not be less than twenty-five percent (25%) and not more than
29 thirty percent (30%) of the proceeds of the action or settlement and shall be paid out of the
30 proceeds. The qui tam plaintiff also shall receive an amount for reasonable expenses that the
31 court finds to have been necessarily incurred, plus reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. All such
32 expenses, fees, and costs shall be awarded against the defendant.

33 (f) Whether or not the State proceeds with the action, if the court finds that the qui tam
34 plaintiff planned and initiated the violation of G.S. 1-607 upon which the action was brought,
35 then the court may, to the extent the court considers appropriate, reduce the share of the
36 proceeds of the action which the qui tam plaintiff would otherwise receive under subsection (a),
37 (b), or (e) of this section, taking into account the role of the qui tam plaintiff in advancing the
38 case to litigation and any relevant circumstances pertaining to the violation. If the qui tam
39 plaintiff is convicted of criminal conduct arising from his or her role in the violation of
40 G.S. 1-607, the qui tam plaintiff shall be dismissed from the civil action and shall not receive
41 any share of the proceeds of the action. Such a dismissal shall not prejudice the right of the
42 State to continue the action.

43 (g) If the State does not proceed with the action and the qui tam plaintiff conducts the
44 action, the court may award to the defendant its reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses if the
45 defendant prevails in the action and the court finds that the claim of the qui tam plaintiff was
46 clearly frivolous, clearly vexatious, or brought primarily for purposes of harassment.

47 **"§ 1-611. Certain actions barred.**

48 (a) No court shall have jurisdiction over an action brought under G.S. 1-608(b) against
49 a member of the General Assembly, a member of the judiciary, or a senior executive branch
50 official acting in their official capacity if the action is based on evidence or information known
51 to the State when the action was brought.

1 **(b)** In no event may a person bring an action under G.S. 1-608(b) that is based upon
2 allegations or transactions that are the subject of a civil suit or an administrative civil money
3 penalty proceeding in which the State is already a party.

4 **(c)** No civil action may be brought under this Article by a person who is or was a public
5 employee or public official if the allegations of such action are based substantially upon either
6 of the following:

7 **(1)** Allegations of wrongdoing or misconduct which such person had a duty or
8 obligation to report or investigate within the scope of his or her public
9 employment or office.

10 **(2)** Information or records to which the person had access as a result of his or
11 her public employment or office.

12 **(d)** No court shall have jurisdiction over an action under G.S. 108A-70.12 based upon
13 the public disclosure of allegations or transactions (i) in a criminal, civil, or administrative
14 hearing at the State or federal level, (ii) in a congressional, legislative, administrative, General
15 Accounting Office, or State Auditor's report, hearing, audit, or investigation, or (iii) from the
16 news media, unless the action is brought by the Attorney General, or the person bringing the
17 action is an original source of the information. For purposes of this section, "original source"
18 means an individual who has direct and independent knowledge of the information on which
19 the allegations are based and has voluntarily provided the information to the State before filing
20 an action under G.S. 108A-70.12 that is based on the information.

21 **"§ 1-612. State not liable for certain expenses.**

22 The State is not liable for expenses that a person incurs in bringing an action under
23 G.S. 1-608(b).

24 **"§ 1-613. Private action for retaliation action.**

25 Any employee who is discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, or in any
26 other manner discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment by his or her
27 employer because of lawful acts done by the employee on behalf of the employee or others in
28 furtherance of an action under this Article, or in furtherance of other efforts to stop one or more
29 violations of G.S. 1-607, including investigation for, initiation of, testimony for, or assistance
30 in an action filed or to be filed under this Article, shall be entitled to all relief necessary to
31 make the employee whole. Such relief shall include reinstatement with the same seniority status
32 the employee would have had but for the discrimination, two times the amount of back pay,
33 interest on the back pay, and compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the
34 discrimination, including litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. An employee may
35 bring an action in superior court for the relief provided in this section.

36 **"§ 1-614. Civil investigative demand.**

37 **(a)** A civil investigative demand is an administrative subpoena. Whenever the Attorney
38 General has reason to believe that a person has information or is in possession, custody, or
39 control of any document or other object relevant to an investigation or that would lead to the
40 discovery of relevant information in an investigation of a violation of G.S. 1-607, the Attorney
41 General may issue in writing and cause to be served upon the person, before bringing or
42 intervening or making an election in an action under G.S. 1-608 or other false claims law, a
43 civil investigative demand requiring the person to produce any documents or objects for their
44 inspection and copying.

45 **(b)** The civil investigative demand shall comply with all of the following:

46 **(1)** Be served upon the person in the manner required for service of process in
47 civil actions and may be served by the Attorney General or investigator
48 assigned to the North Carolina Department of Justice.

49 **(2)** Describe the nature of the conduct constituting the violation under
50 investigation.

1 (3) Describe the class or classes of any documents or objects to be produced
2 with sufficient definiteness to permit them to be fairly identified.

3 (4) Prescribe a reasonable date and time at which the person shall produce any
4 document or object.

5 (5) Advise the person that objections to or reasons for not complying with the
6 demand may be filed with the Attorney General on or before that date and
7 time.

8 (6) Designate a person to whom any document or object shall be produced.

9 (7) Contain a copy of subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

10 (c) The date within which any document or object must be produced shall be more than
11 30 days after the civil investigative demand has been served upon the person.

12 (d) A civil investigative demand may include an express demand for any product of
13 discovery. A product of discovery includes the original or duplicate of any deposition,
14 interrogatory, document, thing, examination, or admission, that is obtained by any method of
15 discovery in any judicial or administrative proceeding of an adversarial nature, and any digest,
16 compilation, and index of any product of discovery. Whenever a civil investigative demand is
17 an express demand for any product of discovery, a copy of the demand shall be served on the
18 person from whom the discovery was obtained, and the Attorney General shall notify the
19 person to whom the demand is issued of the date on which the copy was served. A demand for
20 a product of discovery shall not be returned or returnable until 30 days after a copy of the
21 demand has been served on the person from whom the discovery was obtained. Within 30 days
22 after service of the demand, the person from whom the discovery was obtained or the person on
23 whom the demand was served will serve on the Attorney General a copy of any protective
24 order that prevents or restrains disclosure of the product of discovery to the Attorney General.
25 The Attorney General may petition the court that issued the protective order to modify the
26 order to allow compliance with the demand. Disclosure of any product of discovery pursuant to
27 any express demand does not constitute a waiver of any right or privilege that the person
28 making the disclosure may be entitled to invoke to resist discovery of trial preparation
29 materials.

30 (e) The production of documents and objects in response to a civil investigative demand
31 served under this section shall be made under a sworn certificate by the person to whom the
32 demand is directed, or in the case of a person other than a natural person, a person having
33 knowledge of the facts and circumstances relating to the production and authorized to act on
34 behalf of the person. The certificate shall state that all of the documentary material required by
35 the demand and in the possession, custody, or control of the person to whom the demand is
36 directed has been produced and made available. Upon written agreement between the person
37 served with the civil investigative demand and the Attorney General, the person may substitute
38 copies for originals of all or any part of the documents requested.

39 (f) If a person objects to or otherwise fails to comply with a civil investigative demand
40 served upon the person under subsection (a) of this section, the Attorney General may file an
41 action in superior court for an order to enforce the demand. Venue for the action to enforce the
42 demand shall be in either Wake County or the county in which the person resides, is found, or
43 transacts business. Notice of a hearing on the action to enforce the demand and a copy of the
44 action shall be served upon the person in the same manner as prescribed in the Rules of Civil
45 Procedure. If the court finds that the demand is proper, that there is reasonable cause to believe
46 that there may have been a violation of G.S. 1-607, and that the information sought or
47 document or object demanded is relevant to the violation, the court shall order the person to
48 comply with the demand, subject to modifications the court may prescribe.

49 (g) If the person fails to comply with an order entered pursuant to subsection (f) of this
50 section, the court may do any of the following:

51 (1) Adjudge the person to be in contempt of court.

1 (2) Grant injunctive relief against the person to whom the demand is issued to
2 restrain the conduct which is the subject of the investigation.

3 (3) Grant any other relief as the court may deem proper.

4 (h) A petition for an order of the court to modify or set aside a civil investigative
5 demand issued under this section may be filed by any person who has received a civil
6 investigative demand or in the case of an express demand for any product of discovery, the
7 person on whom the discovery was obtained. The petition may be filed in superior court in
8 either Wake County or the county in which the person resides, is found, or transacts business,
9 or, in the case of a petition to modify an express demand for any product of discovery, the
10 petition shall be filed in the court in which the proceeding was pending when the product of
11 discovery was obtained. Any petition under this subsection must be filed within 30 days after
12 the date of service of the civil investigative demand or before the return date specified in the
13 demand, whichever date is earlier, or within a longer period as may be prescribed in writing by
14 the investigator identified in the demand. The petition shall specify each ground upon which
15 the petitioner relies in seeking relief and may be based upon any failure to comply with the
16 provisions of this section or upon any constitutional or other legal right or privilege of the
17 person. During the pendency of the petition in the court, the court may stay, as it deems proper,
18 the running of the time allowed for compliance with the demand, in whole or in part, except
19 that the person filing the petition shall comply with any portions of the demand not sought to be
20 modified or set aside.

21 (i) Any documents and objects produced pursuant to this section may be used in
22 connection with any civil action brought under G.S. 1-608 and for any use that is consistent
23 with the law, and the regulations and policies of the Attorney General, including use in
24 connection with internal Attorney General memoranda and reports; communications between
25 the Attorney General and a federal, State, or local governmental agency, or a contractor of a
26 federal, State, or local governmental agency, undertaken in furtherance of an Attorney General
27 investigation or prosecution of a case; interviews of any qui tam relator or other witness; oral
28 examinations; depositions; preparation for and response to civil discovery requests;
29 introduction into the record of a case or proceeding applications, motions, memoranda, and
30 briefs submitted to a court or other tribunal; and communications with government
31 investigators, auditors, consultants and experts, the counsel of other parties, arbitrators and
32 mediators, concerning an investigation, case, or proceeding. Any documents and objects
33 obtained by the Attorney General under this section may be shared with any qui tam relator if
34 the Attorney General determines it is necessary as part of any false claims act investigation.
35 Before using or sharing documents and objects obtained by the Attorney General under this
36 section with any person, the Attorney General may require that the person agree to an order of
37 the court protecting the documents or objects, or any information contained in the documents or
38 objects, from disclosure by that person. In the case of documents or objects the producing party
39 has designated as a trade secret or other confidential research, development, or commercial
40 information, the Attorney General shall either (i) require that the person with whom documents
41 or objects are shared be prohibited from disclosing the documents or objects, or any
42 information contained in the documents or objects, or (ii) petition the court for an order
43 directing the producing party to either appear and support the designation or withdraw the
44 designation.

45 (j) The Attorney General may designate an employee of the North Carolina
46 Department of Justice to serve as a custodian of documents and objects.

47 (k) Except as otherwise provided in this section, no documents or objects, or copies
48 thereof, while in the possession of the North Carolina Department of Justice, shall be available
49 for examination by any person other than an employee of the North Carolina Department of
50 Justice. The prohibition in the preceding sentence on the availability of documents or objects
51 shall not apply if consent is given by the person who produced the documents or objects, or, in

1 the case of any product of discovery produced pursuant to an express demand, consent is given
2 by the person from whom the discovery was obtained, or prevent disclosure to any other federal
3 or State agency for use by that agency in furtherance of its statutory responsibilities upon
4 application made by the Attorney General to the superior court showing substantial need for the
5 use of the documents or objects by any agency in furtherance of its statutory responsibilities.

6 (l) While in the possession of the custodian and under reasonable terms and conditions
7 as the Attorney General shall prescribe, documents or objects shall be available for examination
8 by the person who produced the documents or objects, or by a representative of that person
9 authorized by that person to examine the documents or objects.

10 (m) If any documents or objects have been produced by any person in the course of any
11 investigation pursuant to a civil investigative demand under this section, and any case or
12 proceeding before any court arising out of the investigation, or any proceeding before any
13 agency involving the documents or objects, has been completed, or no case or proceeding in
14 which the documents or objects may be used has been commenced within a reasonable time
15 after completion of the investigation, the custodian shall, upon written request of the person
16 who produced the documents or objects, return to the person any documents or objects that
17 have not passed into the control of any court or agency.

18 (n) The North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure shall apply to this section to the extent
19 that the rules are not inconsistent with the provisions of this section.

20 **"§ 1-615. False claims procedure.**

21 (a) Statute of Limitations. – A civil action under G.S. 1-608 may not be brought (i)
22 more than six years after the date on which the violation of G.S. 1-607 was committed or (ii)
23 more than three years after the date when facts material to the right of action are known or
24 reasonably should have been known by the official of the State of North Carolina charged with
25 responsibility to act in the circumstances, but in no event more than 10 years after the date on
26 which the violation is committed, whichever occurs last.

27 (b) If the Attorney General elects to intervene and proceed with an action brought under
28 G.S. 1-608(b), the State may file its own complaint or amend the complaint of a person who
29 has brought an action under G.S. 1-608(b) to clarify or add detail to the claims with respect to
30 which the State is intervening and to add any additional claims with respect to which the State
31 contends it is entitled to relief. For statute of limitations purposes, any such State pleading shall
32 relate back to the filing date of the complaint of the person who originally brought the action, to
33 the extent that the claim of the State arises out of the conduct, transactions, or occurrences set
34 forth, or attempted to be set forth, in the prior complaint of that person.

35 (c) Burden of Proof. – In any action brought under G.S. 1-608, the State or the qui tam
36 plaintiff shall be required to prove all essential elements of the cause of action, including
37 damages, by a preponderance of the evidence.

38 (d) Estoppel. – Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a final judgment rendered
39 in favor of the State in a criminal proceeding charging false statements or fraud, whether upon
40 a verdict after trial or upon a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, shall estop the defendant from
41 denying the essential elements of the offense in any action that involves the same transaction as
42 in the criminal proceeding and which is brought under G.S. 1-608.

43 (e) Venue. – Venue for any action brought pursuant to G.S. 1-608 shall be in either
44 Wake County or in any county in which a claim originated, or in which any statement or record
45 was made, or acts done, or services or property rendered in connection with any act constituting
46 part of the violation of this Article.

47 (f) Service on Federal, State, or Local Authorities. – With respect to the United States
48 or any State or local government that is named as a co-plaintiff in an action brought under
49 G.S. 1-608, a seal on the action ordered by the court under G.S. 1-608(b) shall not preclude the
50 State or the person bringing the action from serving the complaint, any other pleadings, or the
51 written disclosure of substantially all material evidence and information possessed by the

1 person bringing the action on the law enforcement authorities that are authorized under the law
2 of the co-plaintiff government to investigate and prosecute such actions on behalf of that
3 co-plaintiff government, except that the seal applies to the law enforcement authorities so
4 served to the same extent as the seal applies to other parties in the action.

5 (g) A civil action may not be brought under both this Article and Part 7 of Article 2 of
6 Chapter 108A of the General Statutes.

7 **"§ 1-616. Remedies under other laws; severability of provisions; liberality of legislative**
8 **construction; adoption of legislative history.**

9 (a) Remedies Under Other Laws. – The provisions of this Article are not exclusive, and
10 the remedies provided for in this Article shall be in addition to any other remedies provided for
11 in any other law or available under common law. No criminal or administrative action need be
12 brought against any person as a condition for establishing civil liability under this section.

13 (b) If any provision of this Article or the application of this Article to any person or
14 circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Article and the application of
15 the provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected by that holding.

16 (c) This Article shall be interpreted and construed so as to be consistent with the federal
17 False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729, et seq., and any subsequent amendments to that act.

18 **"§ 1-617. Reporting.**

19 (a) In reporting on the terms and disbursements set forth in any settlement agreement or
20 final order or judgment in a case filed under this Article as required by G.S. 114-2.5, the report
21 shall include the percentage of the proceeds and the amount paid to any qui tam plaintiff under
22 G.S. 1-610.

23 (b) On or before February 1 of each year, the Attorney General shall submit to the Joint
24 Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Chairs of the Appropriations
25 Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety of the House of Representatives and the Senate a
26 report on the number of qui tam cases under this Article pending in the State and the number of
27 qui tam cases pending in other jurisdictions involving the State, the number of qui tam cases
28 under this Article that were settled, the number of qui tam cases in which judgment was
29 entered, and the amount of proceeds paid to qui tam plaintiffs during the previous calendar
30 year.

31 **"§ 1-618. Rules.**

32 The Attorney General may adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes set forth in this
33 Article."

34 **SECTION 2.** Part 6 of Article 2 of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes is
35 amended by adding a new section to read:

36 **"§ 108A-63.1. Health care fraud subpoena to produce documents.**

37 (a) The Attorney General, acting through the Medicaid Investigations Unit of the
38 Department of Justice, may, when engaged in an investigation of an alleged violation of
39 G.S. 108A-63 and prior to the arrest of a suspect, issue in writing and cause to be served a
40 subpoena to produce documents upon any corporation or governmental entity requiring the
41 production of any records, books, papers, electronic media, objects, or other documents which
42 may be relevant to a criminal investigation of a violation of G.S. 108A-63.

43 (b) A subpoena under this section may require the custodian of records of the
44 corporation or governmental entity to produce an affidavit certifying that the custodian made a
45 thorough and diligent search for the documents requested and that the documents produced
46 constitute all the records requested to the best of the custodian's knowledge, information, and
47 belief.

48 (c) A subpoena under this section shall describe the documents required to be produced
49 and prescribe a return date within a reasonable period of time, of no less than 20 days from the
50 date of service, within which the documents can be assembled and made available.

1 (d) A corporation or governmental entity may comply with a subpoena issued under this
2 section by delivering the documents to the Medicaid Investigations Unit by any of the
3 following methods:

4 (1) By hand delivery.

5 (2) By mailing the documents by certified mail.

6 (3) By making the documents reasonably available for transfer to an agent of the
7 Medicaid Investigations Unit at a place of business of the corporation or
8 governmental entity.

9 (4) If agreed to by the Medicaid Investigations Unit and the corporation or
10 governmental entity, by any other means.

11 (e) A corporation or governmental entity may move to quash or modify a subpoena
12 issued under this section if it is oppressive or unreasonable or does not comply with the
13 requirements of this section. The motion must be made before the time specified in the
14 subpoena for production and may be made before a judge of the superior court.

15 (f) In the case of failure by any corporation or governmental entity without adequate
16 excuse to obey a subpoena issued under this section, the Attorney General may invoke the aid
17 of a judge of the superior court. The court may issue an order requiring the subpoenaed
18 corporation or governmental entity to appear before the Attorney General to produce records.
19 Failure to obey the order of the court may be punished as contempt of court."

20 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 108A-63 reads as rewritten:

21 **"§ 108A-63. Medical assistance provider fraud.**

22 (a) It shall be unlawful for any provider of medical assistance under this Part to
23 knowingly and willfully make or cause to be made any false statement or representation of a
24 material fact:

25 (1) In any application for payment under this Part, or for use in determining
26 entitlement to such payment; or

27 (2) With respect to the conditions or operation of a provider or facility in order
28 that such provider or facility may qualify or remain qualified to provide
29 assistance under this Part.

30 (b) It shall be unlawful for any provider of medical assistance to knowingly and
31 willfully conceal or fail to disclose any fact or event affecting:

32 (1) His initial or continued entitlement to payment under this Part; or

33 (2) The amount of payment to which such person is or may be entitled.

34 (c) ~~Any~~ Except as otherwise provided in subsection (e) of this section, any person who
35 violates a provision of this section shall be guilty of a Class I felony.

36 (d) "Provider" shall include any person who provides goods or services under this Part
37 and any other person acting as an employee, representative or agent of such person.

38 (e) In connection with the delivery of or payment for benefits, items, or services under
39 this Part, it shall be unlawful for any provider of medical assistance under this Part to
40 knowingly and willfully execute, or attempt to execute, a scheme or artifice to:

41 (1) Defraud the Medical Assistance Program.

42 (2) Obtain, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or
43 promises of material fact, any of the money or property owned by, or under
44 the custody or control of, the Medical Assistance Program.

45 A violation of this subsection is a Class H felony. A conspiracy to violate this subsection is a
46 Class I felony.

47 (f) It shall be unlawful for any provider, with the intent to obstruct, delay, or mislead an
48 investigation of a violation of this section by the Attorney General's office, to knowingly and
49 willfully make or cause to be made a false entry in, alter, destroy, or conceal, or make a false
50 statement about a financial, medical, or other record related to the provision of a benefit, item,
51 or service under this Part."

1 **SECTION 4.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective January 1, 2010, and applies
2 to acts committed on or after that date. A civil action may be filed after January 1, 2010, under
3 Section 1 of this act based on acts committed prior to that date if the activity would also be
4 covered under Part 7 of Article 2 of Chapter 108A of the General Statutes and if the limitation
5 period set forth in G.S. 1-615(a) and G.S. 108A-70.13 has not lapsed. Section 3 of this act
6 becomes effective December 1, 2009, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.
7 The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.