



NORTH CAROLINA  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
*of the* COURTS

# **Court Filings in North Carolina State Courts**

**Presentation to the House Legislative Research Committee on  
Judicial Efficiency and Effective Administration of Justice**

November 21, 2013  
John W. Smith, Director



# Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution

## **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.

# Superior Court v. District Court

## Superior Court

Original jurisdiction: all felony cases; civil cases in excess of \$25,000\*; decisions of most administrative agencies.

## District Court

Original jurisdiction: misdemeanor cases not assigned to magistrates; probable cause hearings; accept guilty/no contest pleas in certain felony cases; civil cases \$25,000\* or less; juvenile proceedings; domestic relations; mental health hospital commitments.

\*Through June 30, 2015, either the district court or the superior court is the proper division for the trial of civil actions in which the amount in controversy is between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

# Overview of Judicial Branch Personnel

- Approximately 6,000 employees
- Includes 533 elected judicial officials
  - 100 Clerks of Superior Court
  - 44 District Attorneys
  - 97 Resident Superior Court Judges
  - 270 District Court Judges
  - 15 Court of Appeals Judges
  - 7 Supreme Court Justices
- 15 appointed Special SCJs, including 3 Business Court Judges
- 676 appointed Magistrates

# By the Numbers

## Facts about the Judicial Branch and its component parts

# 30,000

Law Enforcement Officers served  
daily through our databases

# 1 Million

Processes in NCAWARE

(served and unserved warrants, orders for arrest, etc.)

2,000 served each day



# 2 Million

Transactions made daily in computer applications



# 80,000+

Help Desk tickets logged annually

# 160,000

Hits per day on  
online court calendars

# \$773.9 Million

Amount collected and distributed by  
Clerks of Superior Court in FY2012-13

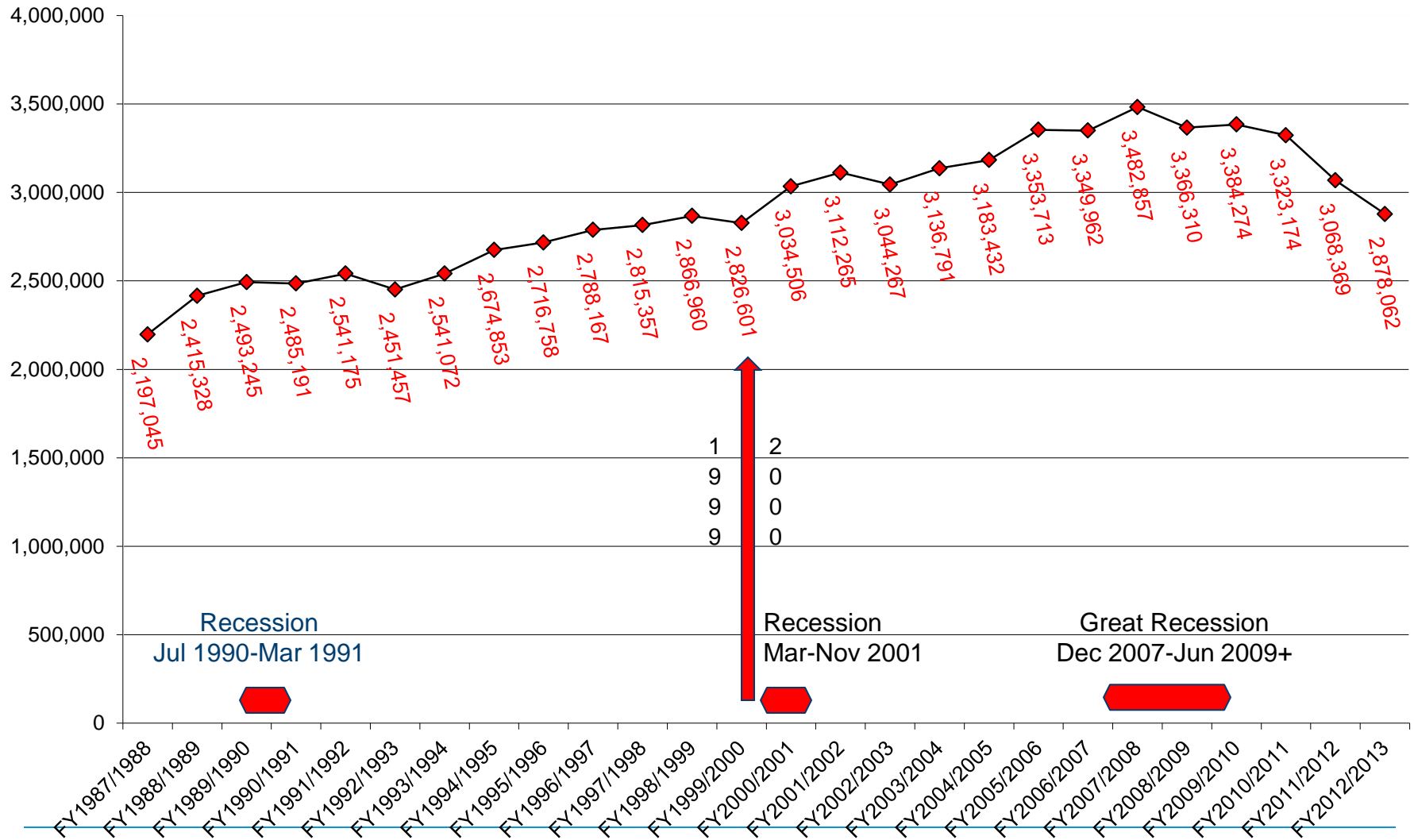
# 2.8 Million

Case filings annually

# 99.7%

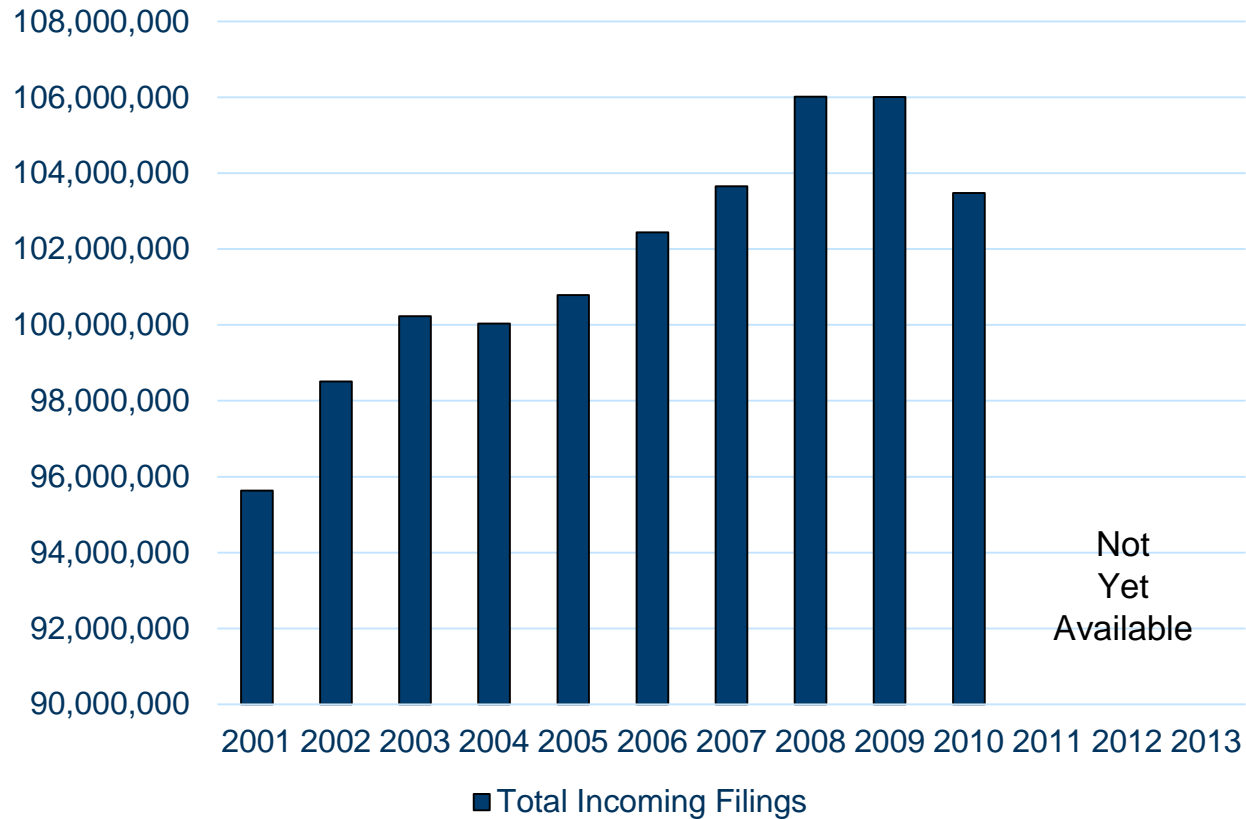
Network reliability/uptime

# Statewide Filings FY1987-88 through FY2012-13

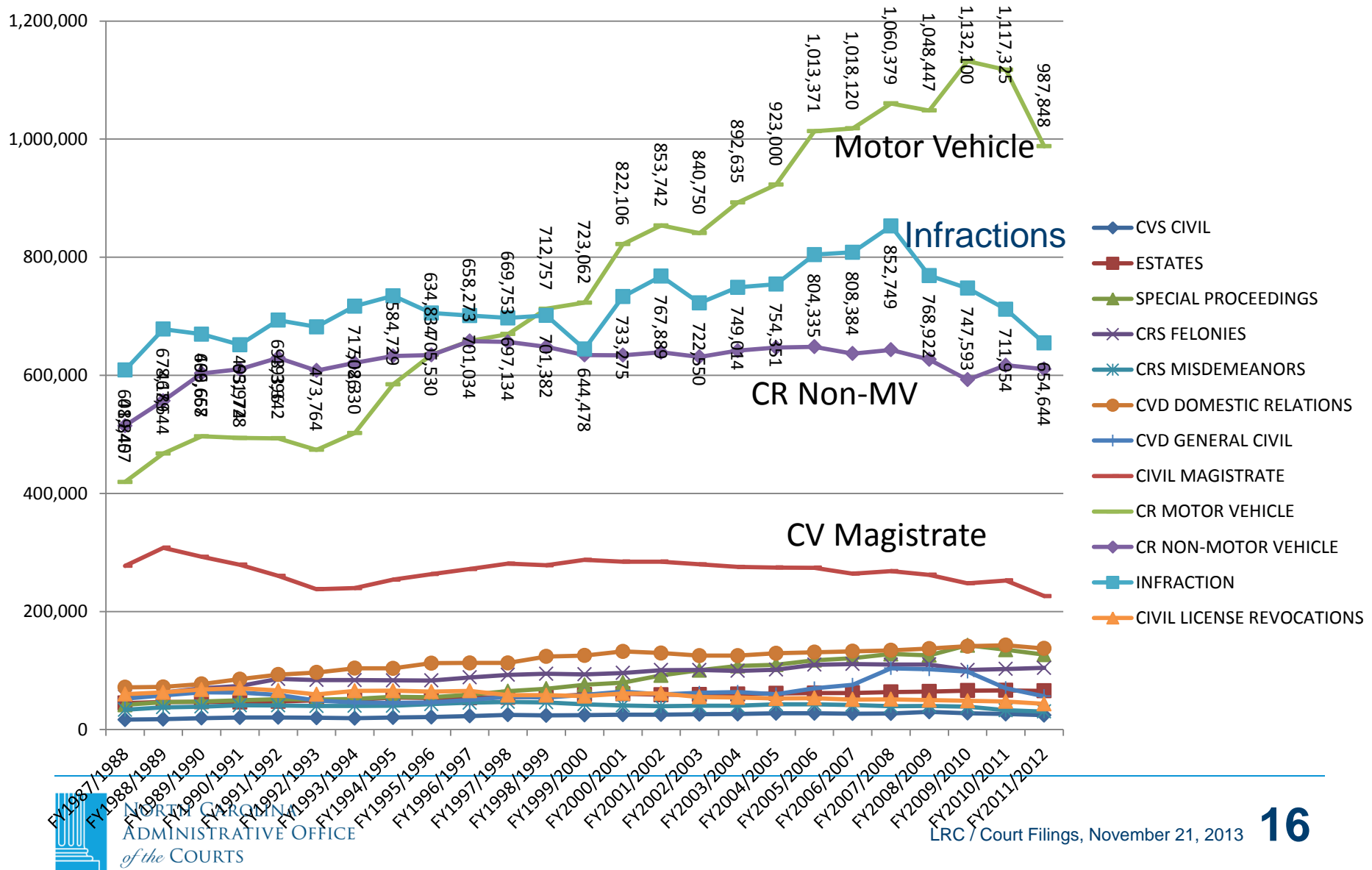


# Nationwide Court Filings

**Source:** Publication: Examining the Work of State Courts: An Analysis of 2010 State Court Caseloads  
National Center for State Courts

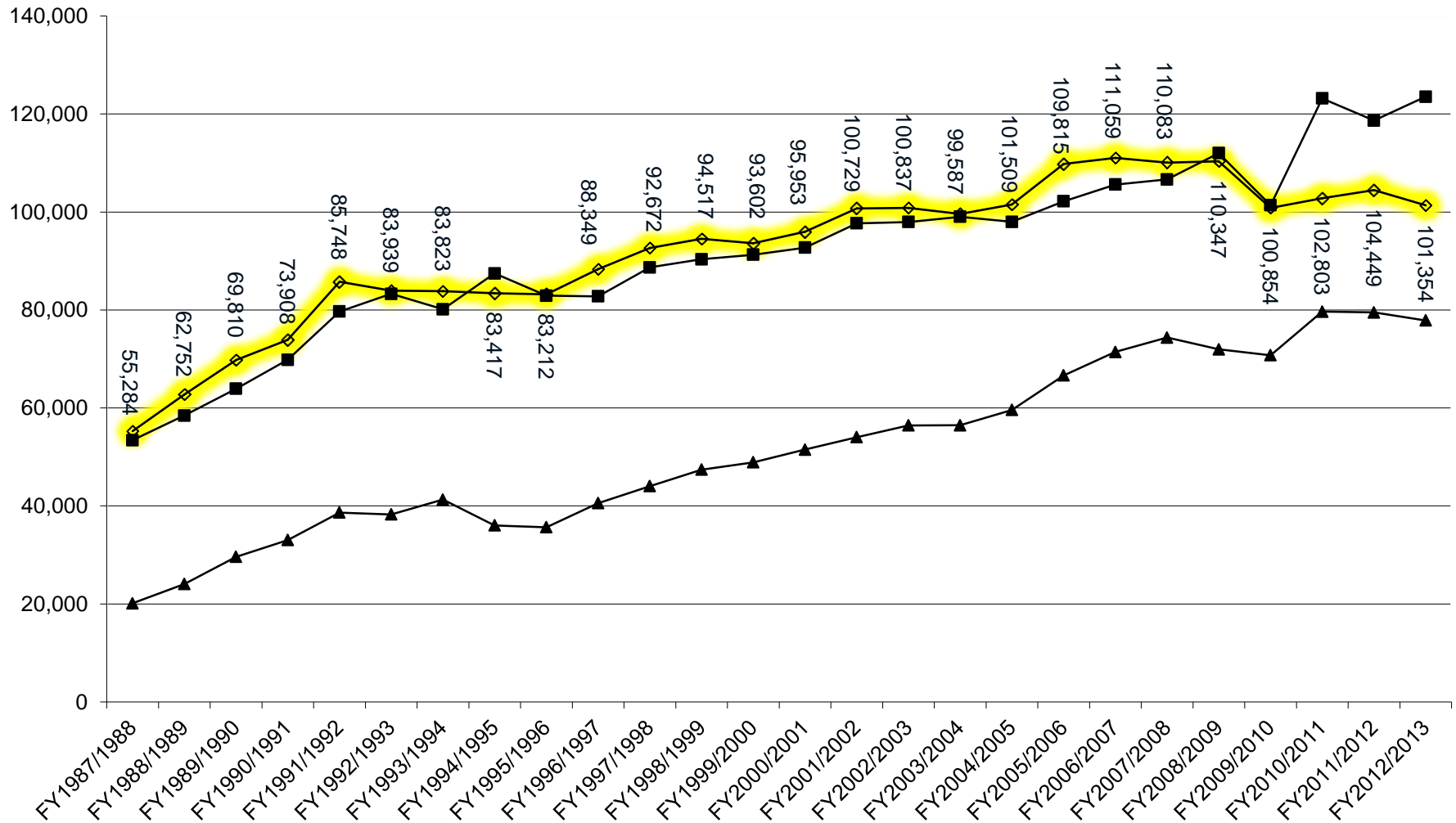


# Filings by Case Type

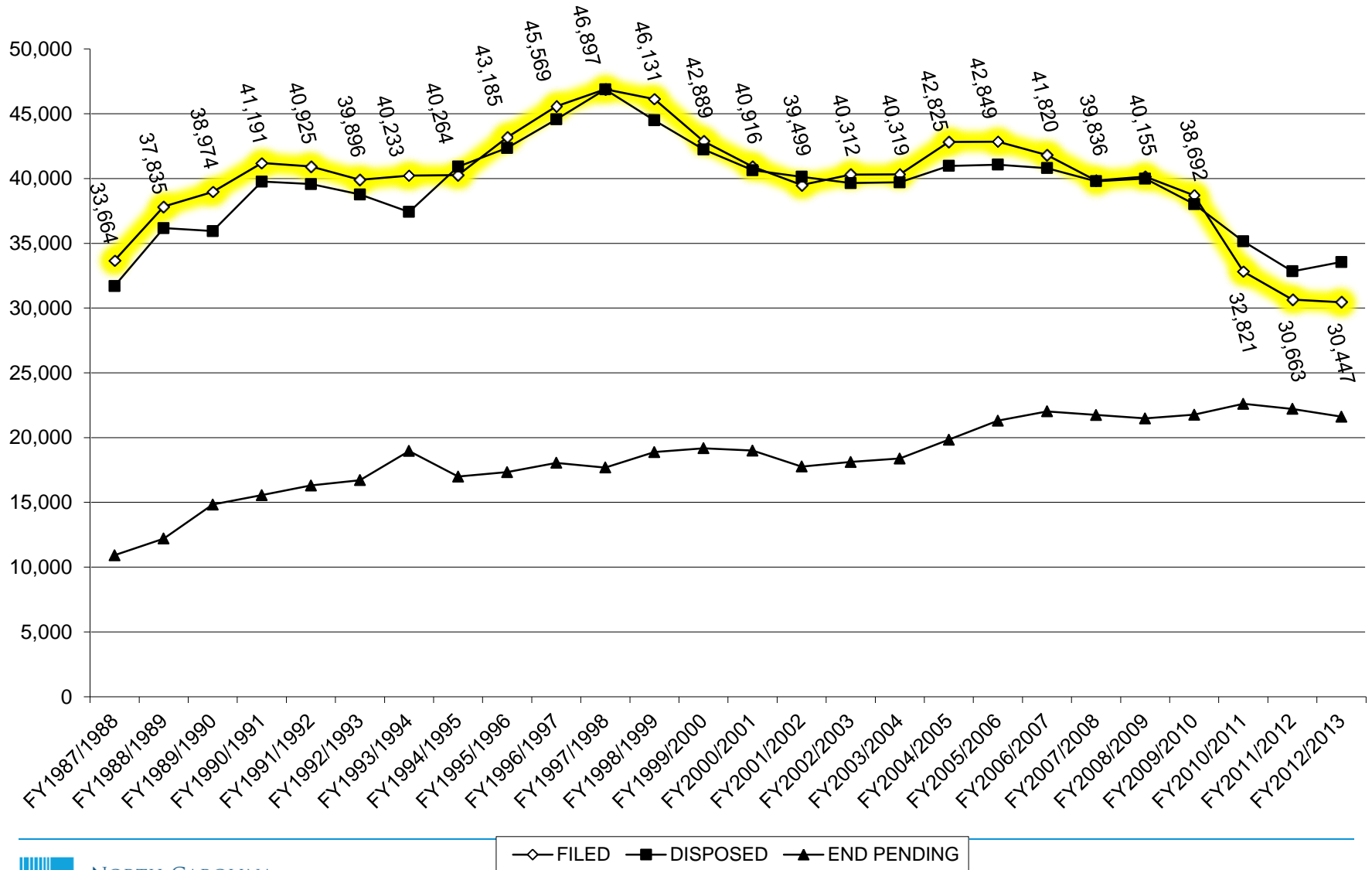




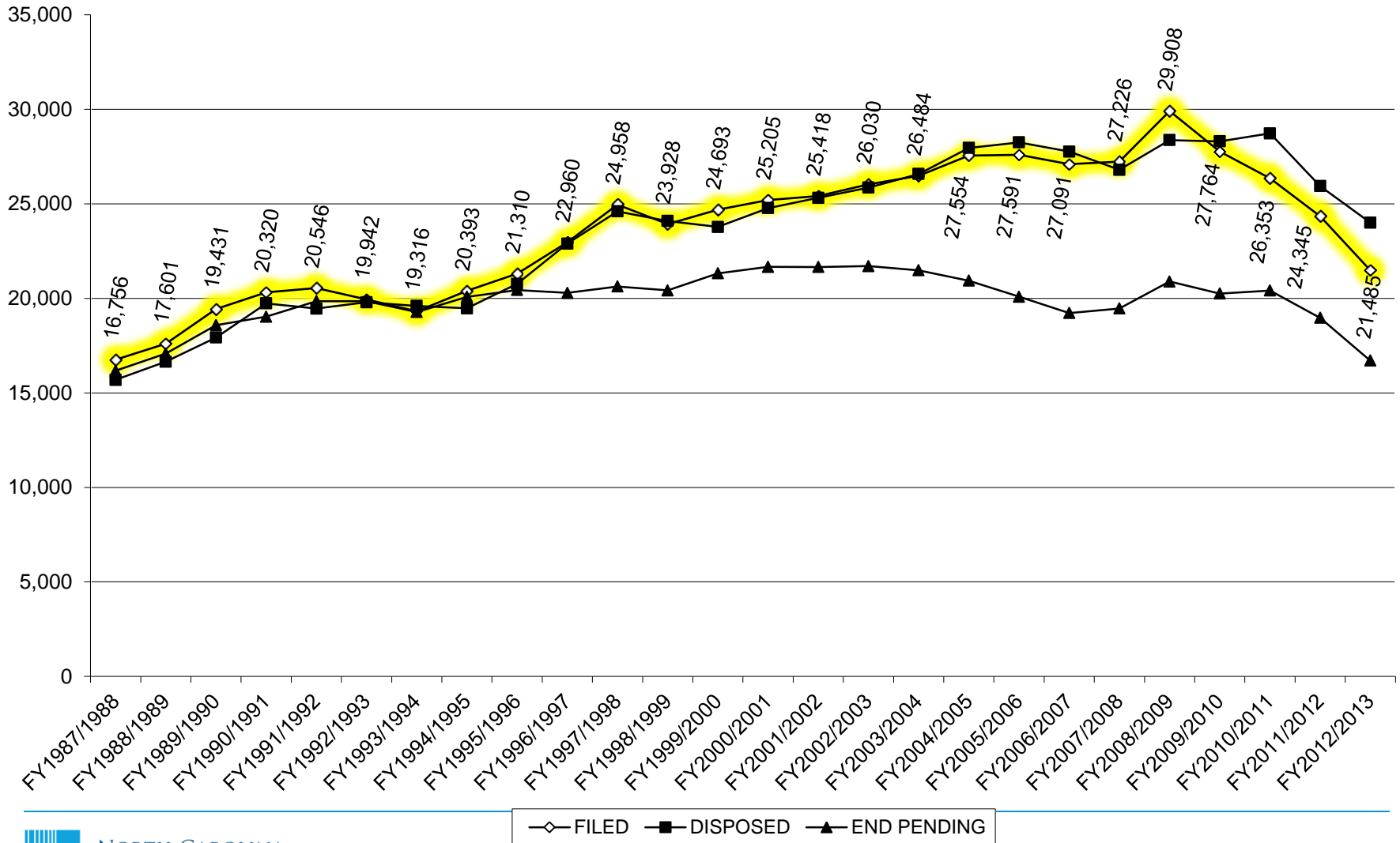
# Superior Criminal Felonies



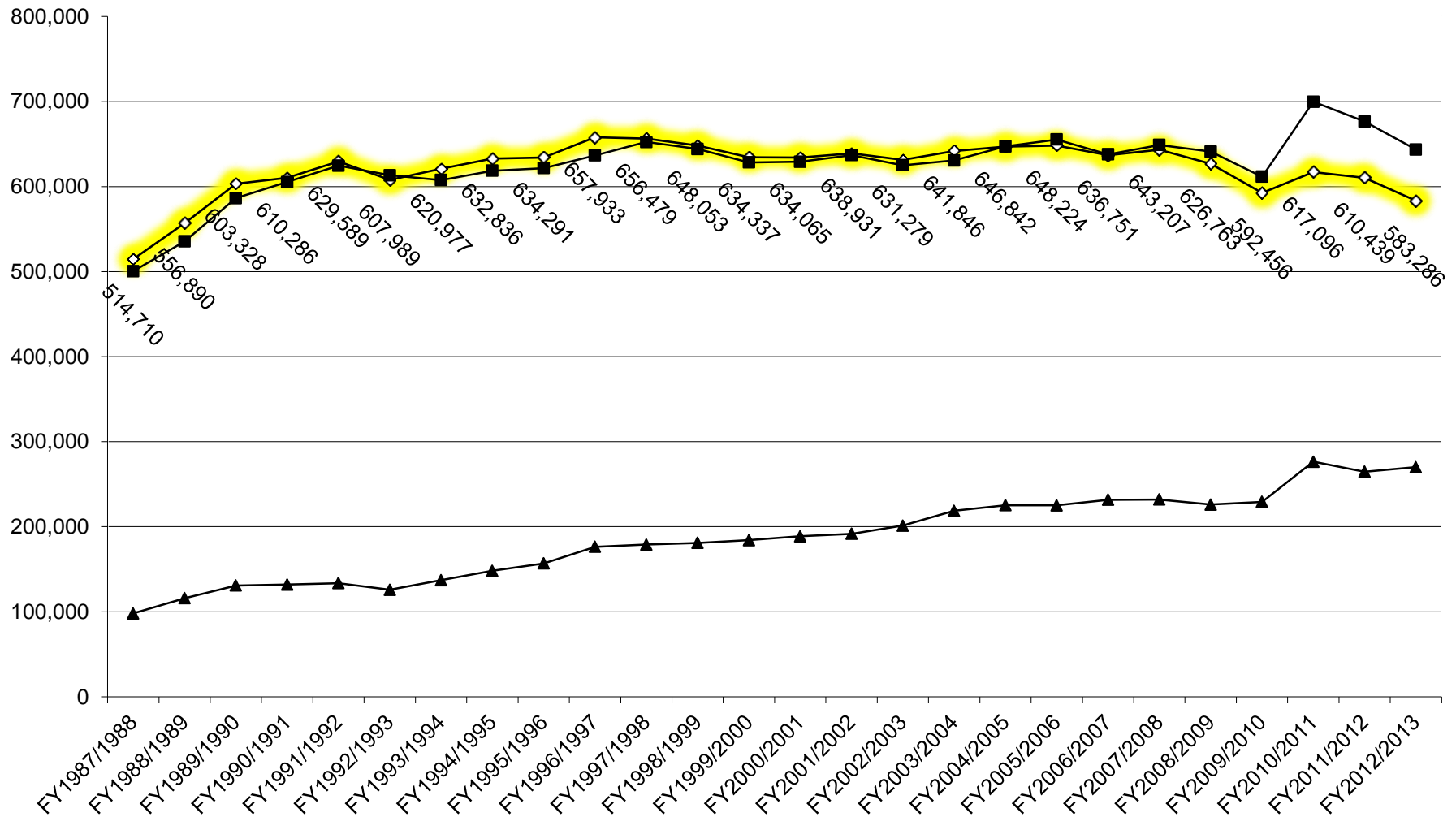
# Superior Criminal Misdemeanors



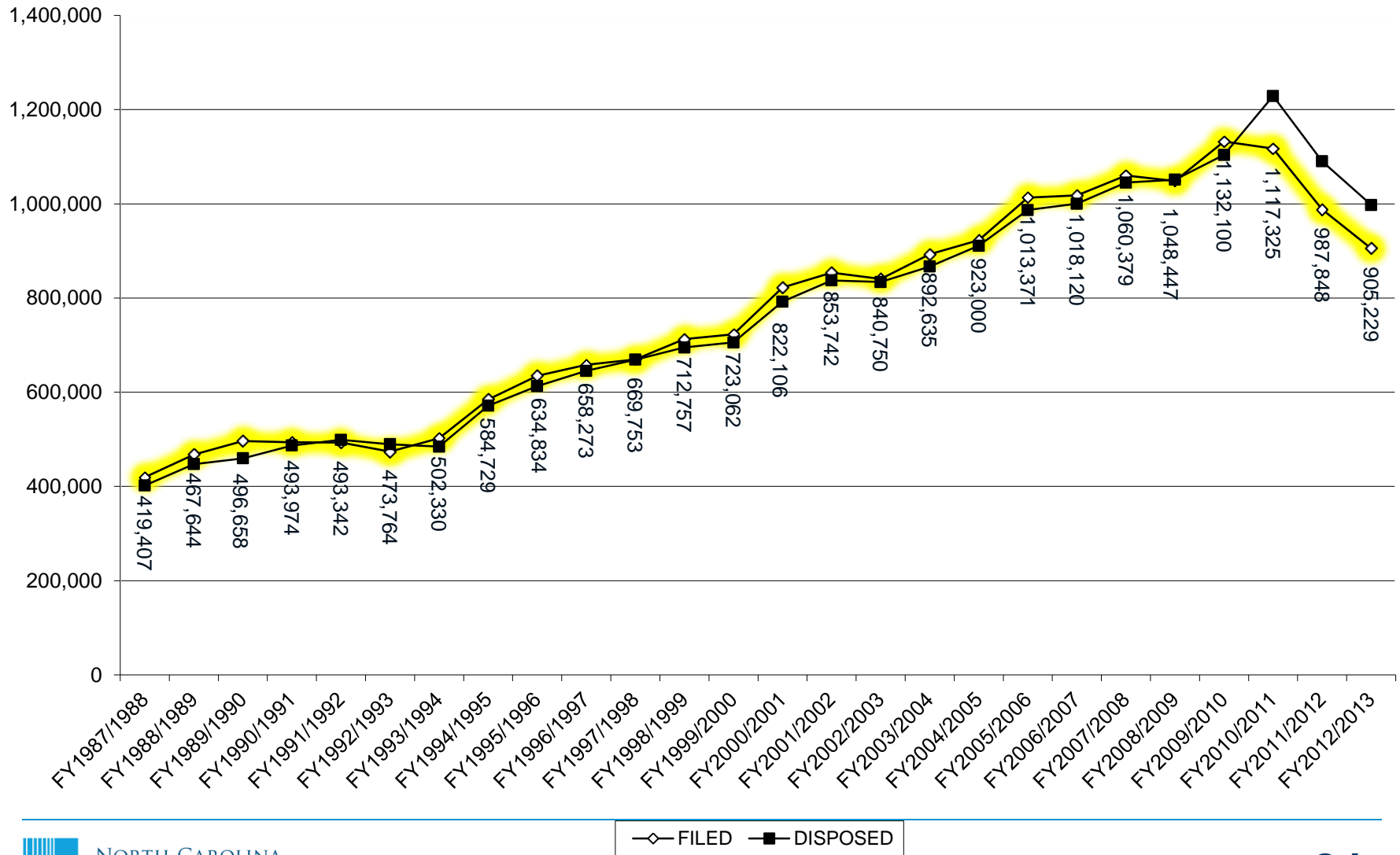
# Superior Civil



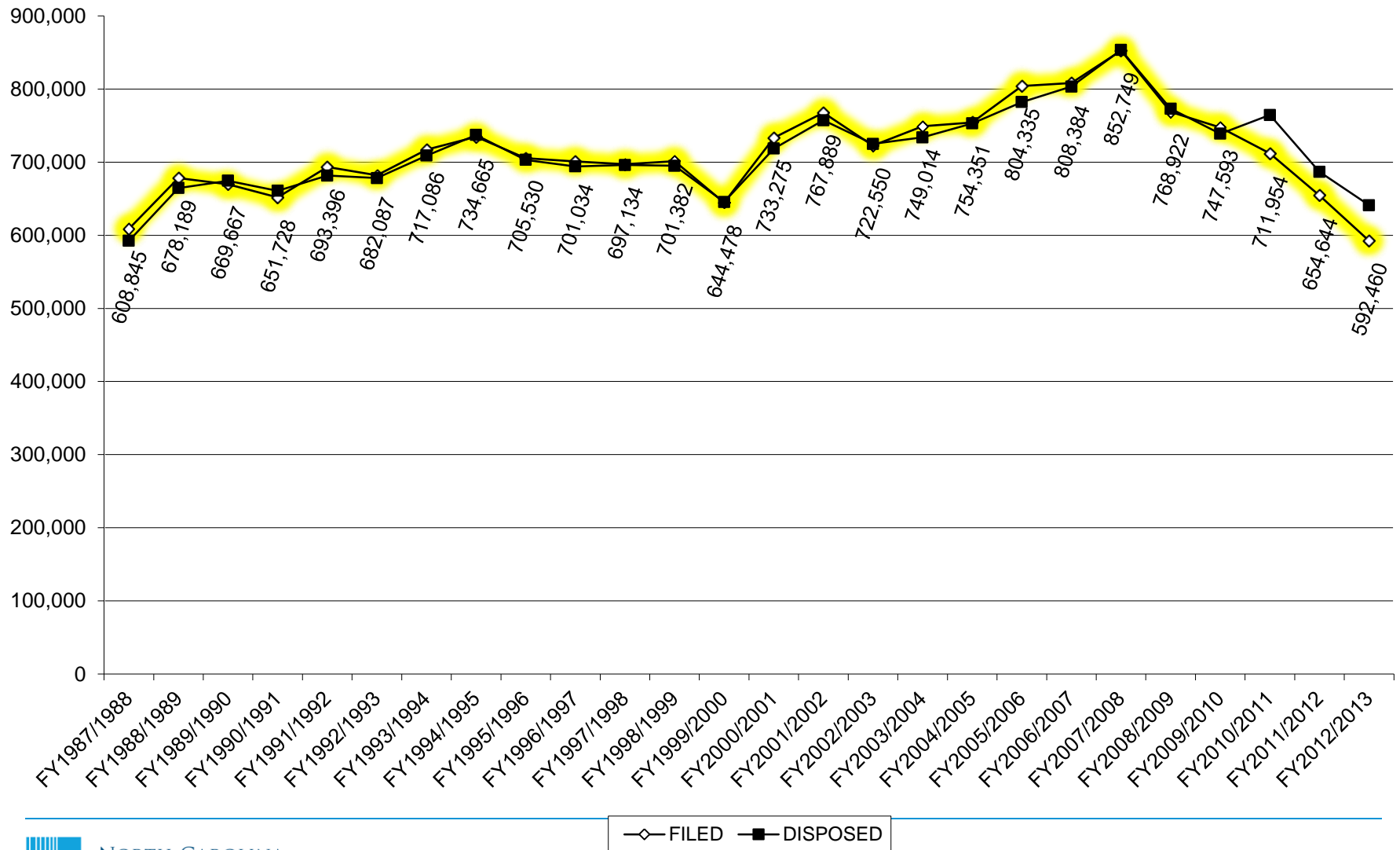
# District Criminal Non-Motor Vehicle



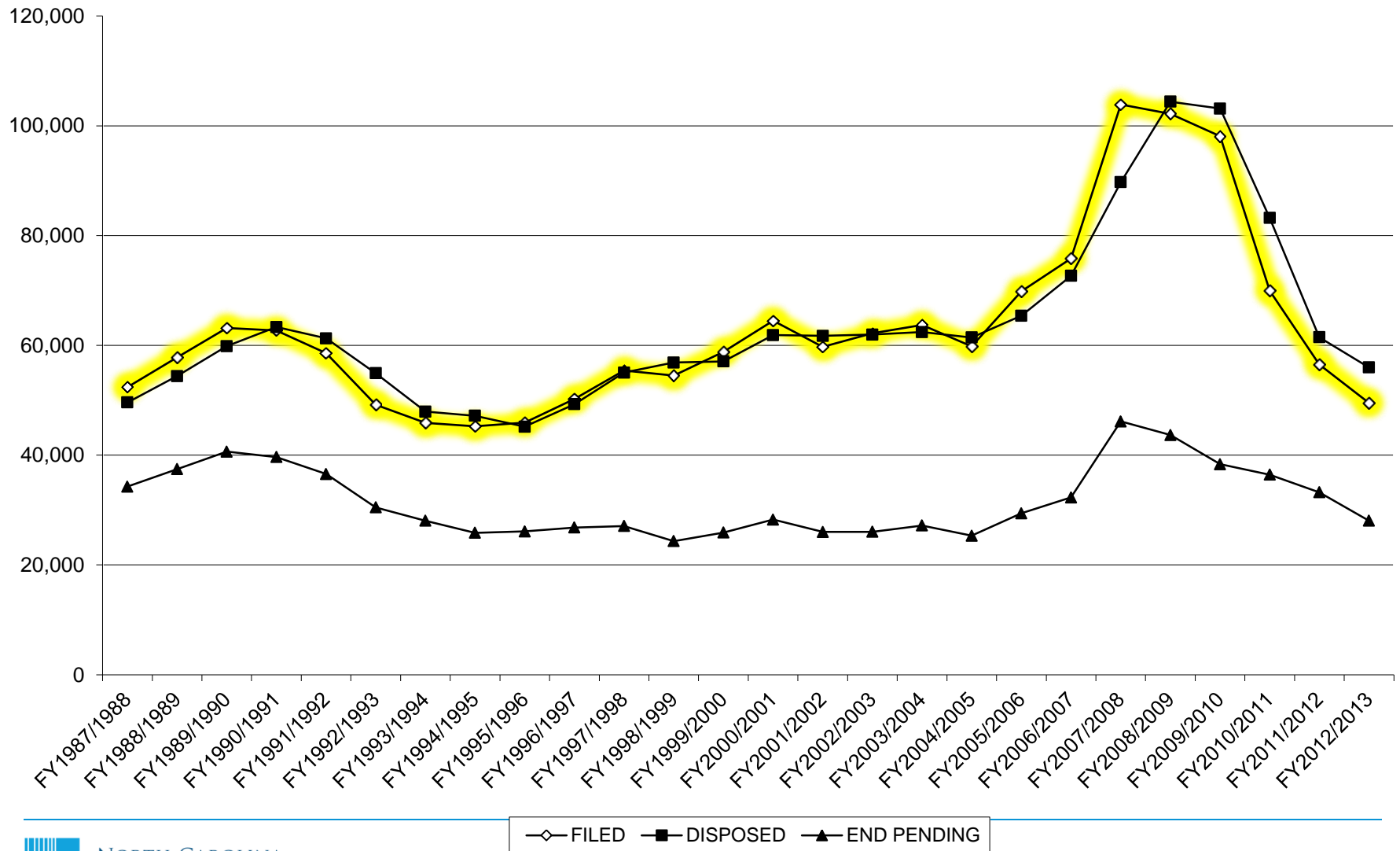
# Motor Vehicle



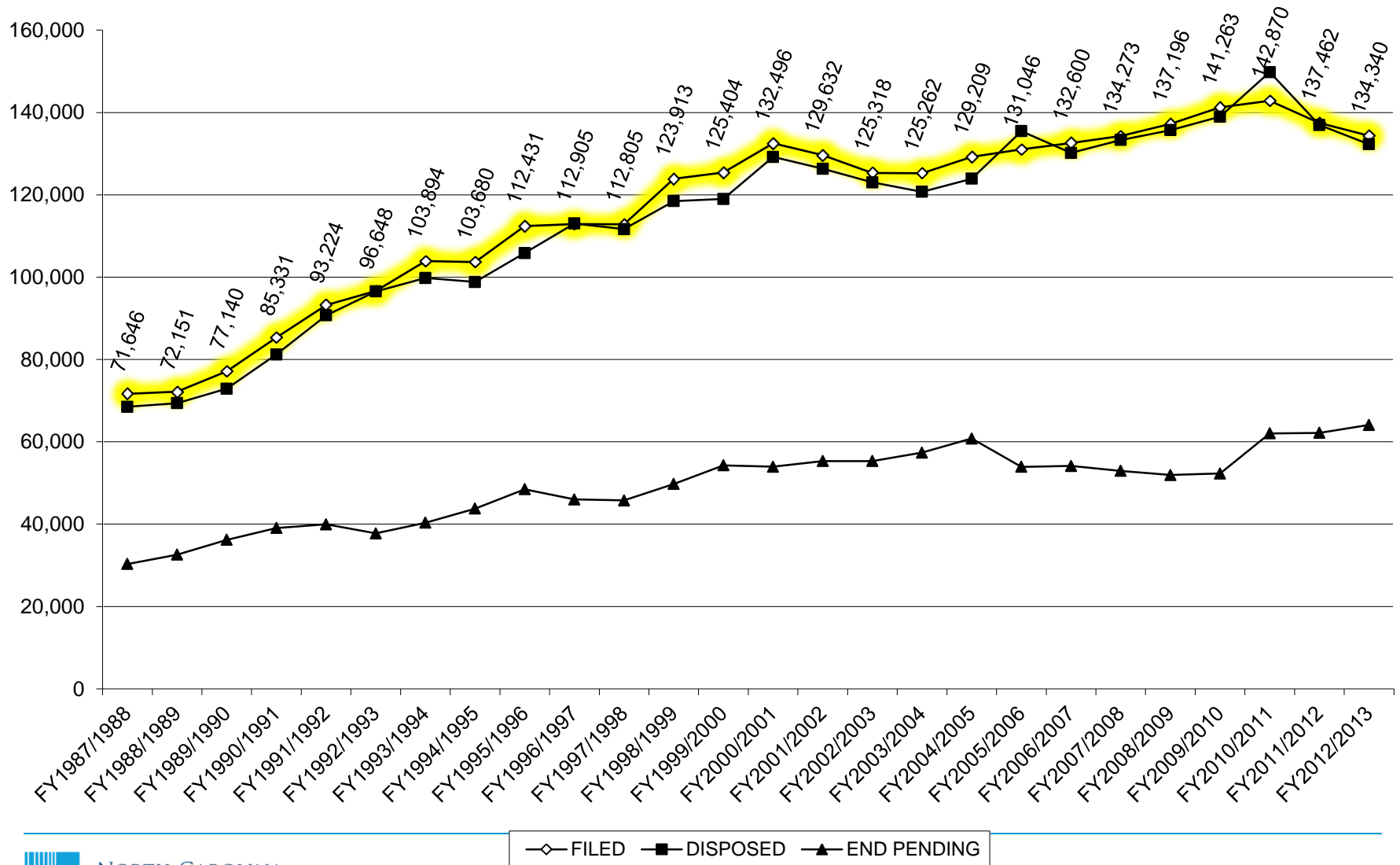
# Infractions



# District General Civil (non Domestic Relations)

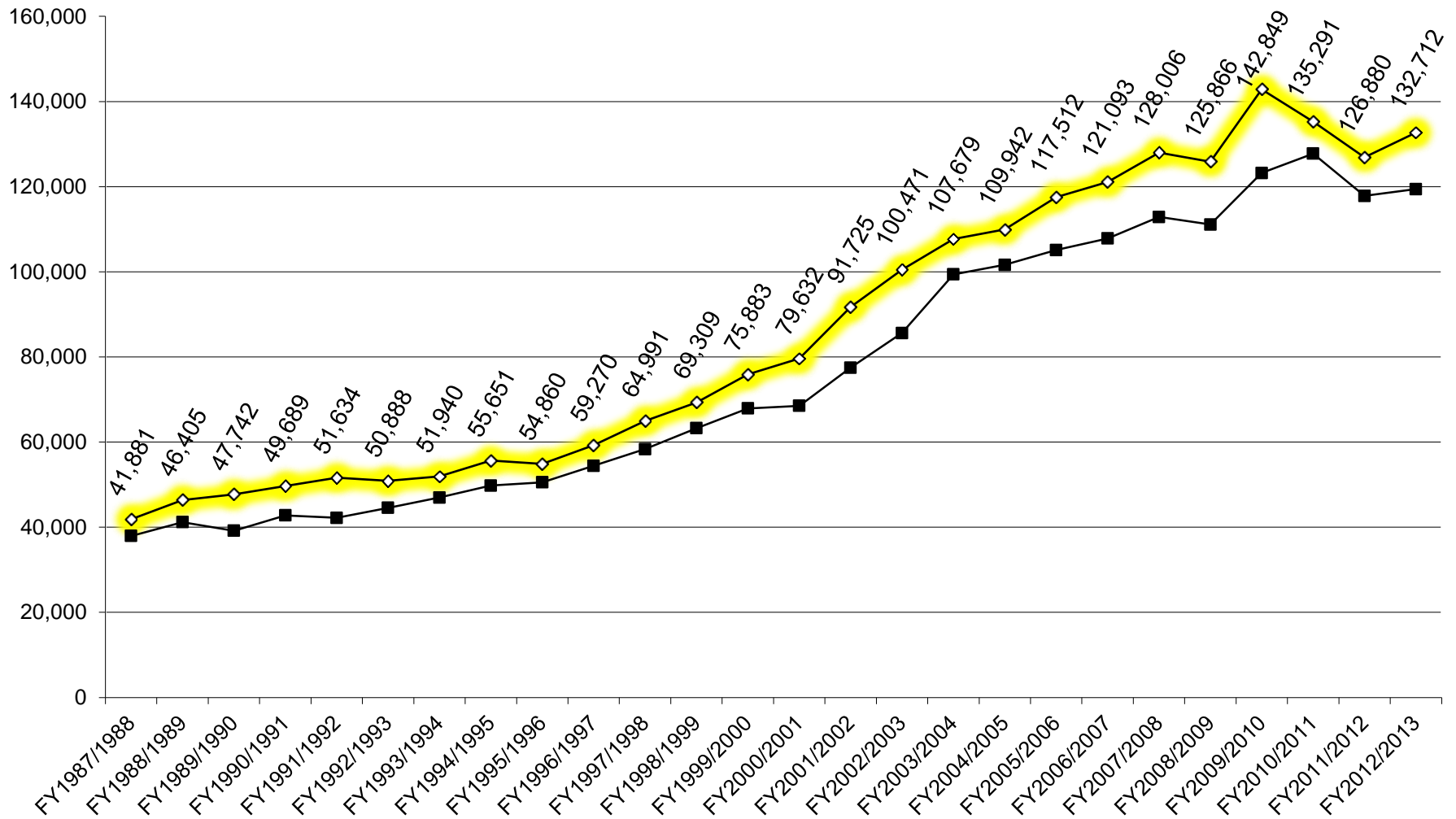


# District Civil Domestic Relations

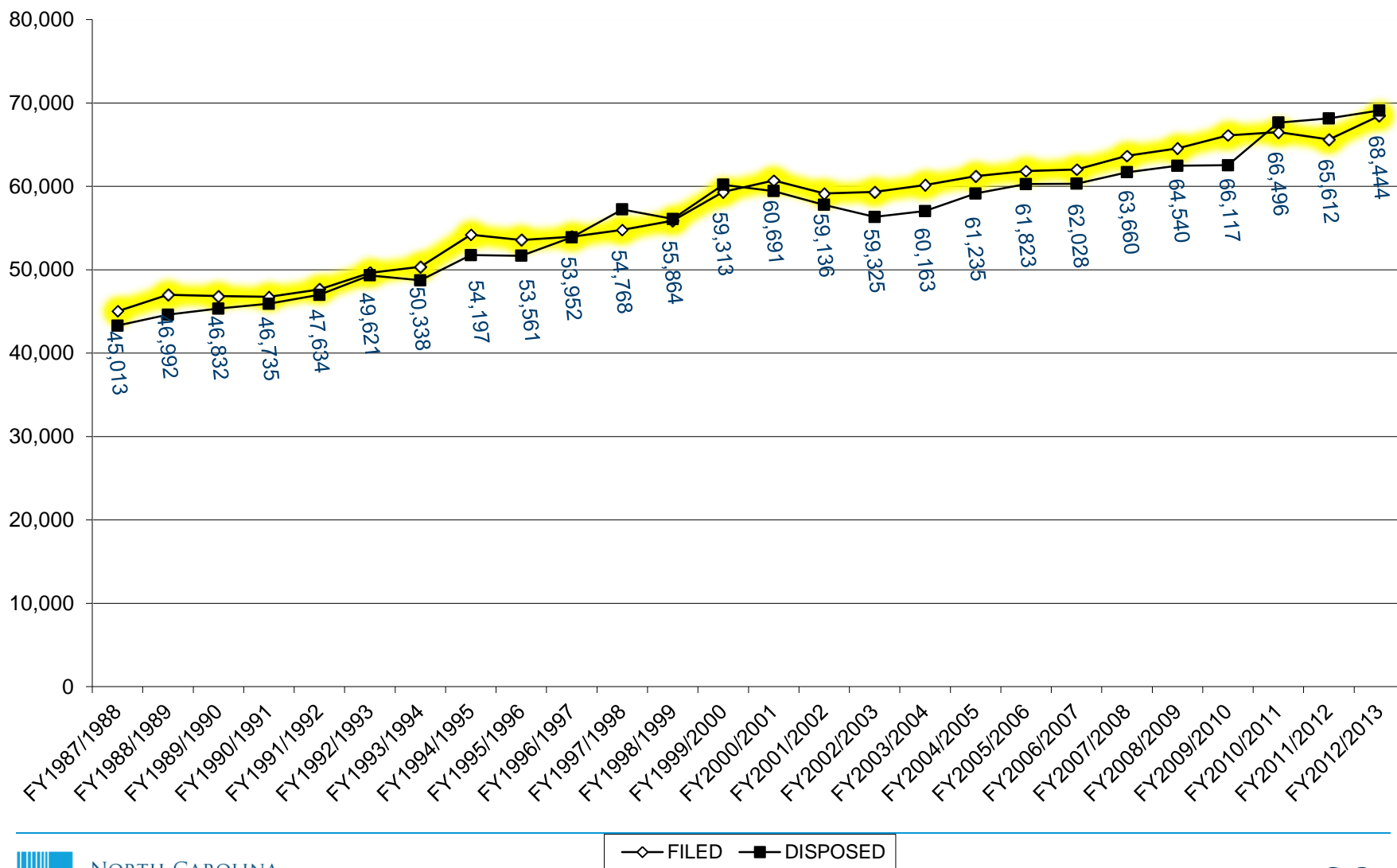




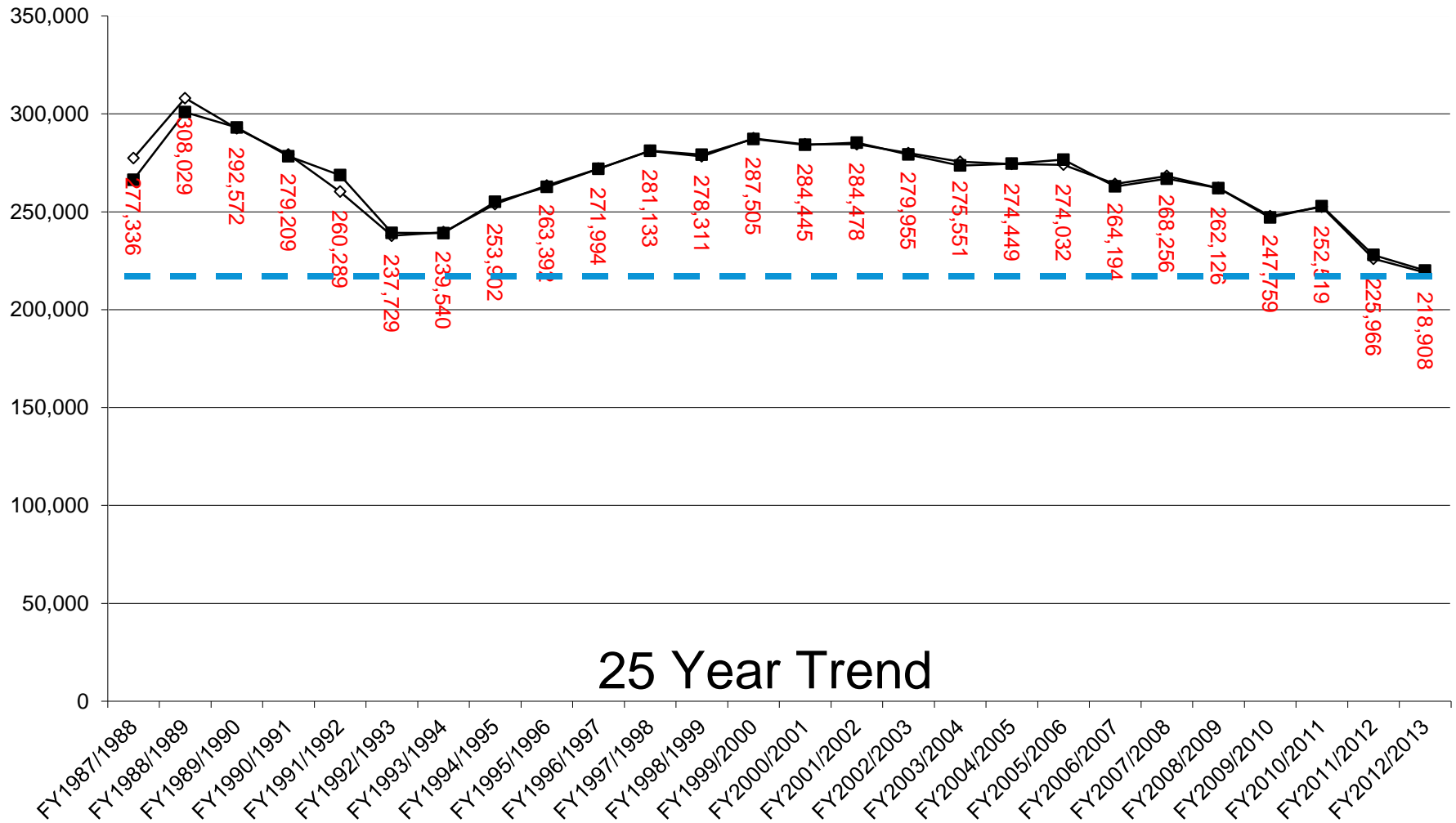
# Special Proceedings



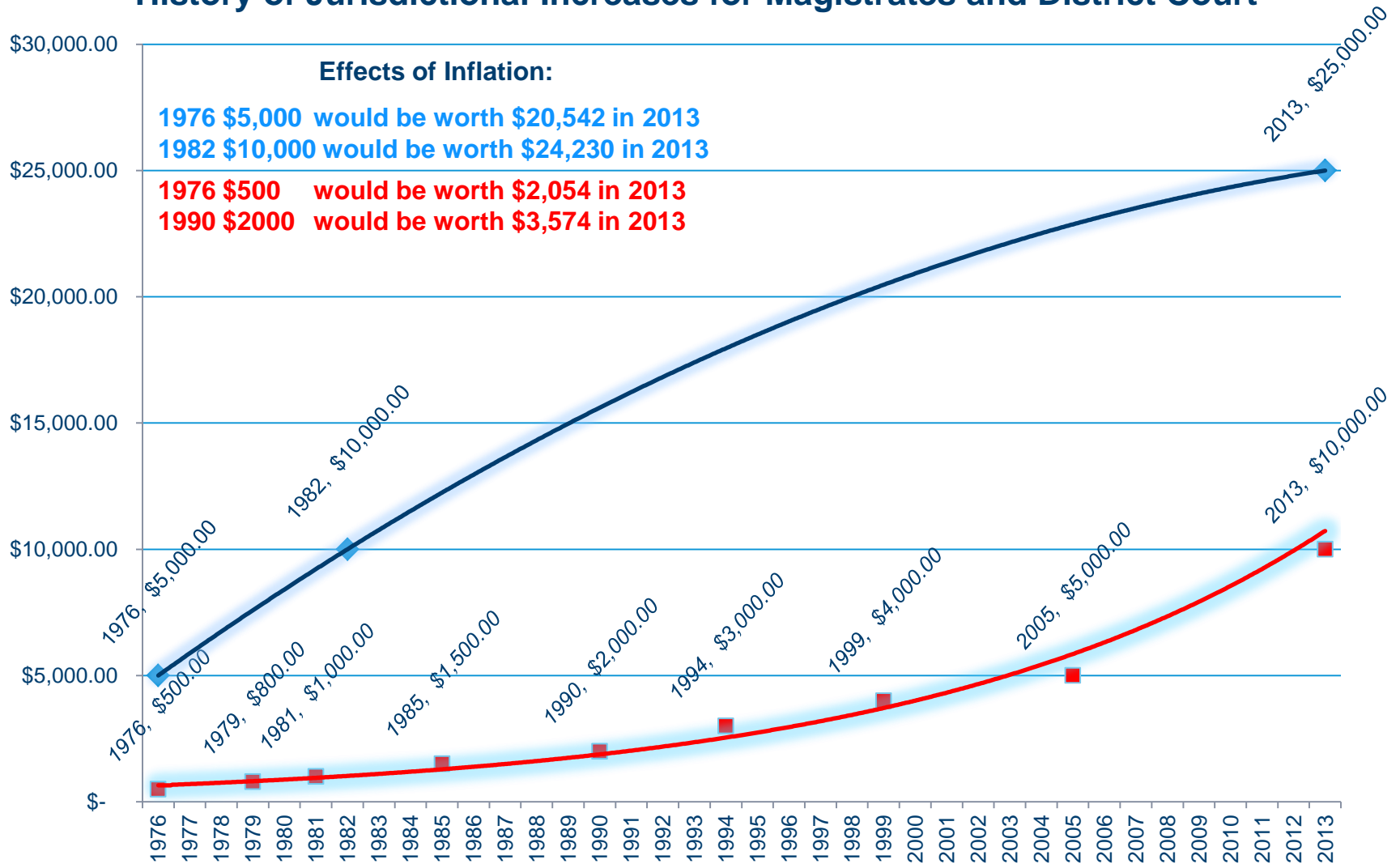
# Estates



# Civil Magistrate: Small Claims Filings



## History of Jurisdictional Increases for Magistrates and District Court



# Caseload Inventory Superior Court FY2012-13

## with dispositions as percent of filings

<u>Case type</u>	<u>Filed</u>	<u>Disposed</u>	
Civil cases	21,458	24,002	112%
Estates	68,444	60,088	101%
Special proceedings	132,712	119,413	90%
Criminal (felonies)	101,354	123,542	122%
Criminal (misdemeanors)	30,447	33,558	110%



# Caseload Inventory District Court FY2012-13

## with dispositions as percent of filings

<u>Case type</u>	<u>Filed</u>	<u>Disposed</u>	
DC Civil	183,835	188,237	102%
DC Criminal – Non MV	583,286	643,591	110%
DC Criminal – Motor vehicle	905,229	997,446	110%
DC Infractions	592,460	641,055	108%
Magistrate - small claims	218,908	219,970	100%

# 2013-15 Workload Needs: 673 positions

District Court Judge	22	Family Court Administrator*	4
Magistrates	92	Family Court Coordinator*	23
Deputy Clerk	227	Custody Mediator I	7
Assistant Clerk	57	Secretary I	3
} 284 Total		Guardian ad Litem District Administrator	6
Superior Court Judicial Assistant I	5	Guardian ad Litem Program Supervisor	39
Superior Court Judicial Assistant II	5	Guardian ad Litem Program Assistant	3
District Court Judicial Assistant I	8	Assistant District Attorney	87
District Court Judicial Assistant II	8	VWLA	56
District Court TCC	6	District Attorney Investigator	7
		DA Administrative Assistant	8

Based on filings 7/1/2010 - 6/30/2013

# Recent Trends

- Estates and special proceedings – time consuming case types – are still generally increasing
- Felony filing levels are quite stable
- Judicial Branch is using available resources to reduce backlog
- Judicial Branch was not adequately funded before recession
- Filings have always trended higher after past recessions





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LAW AND JUSTICE