

<b>Speaker's Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comment Highlights</b>
Margaret Hunt	Attorney	Asheville	Ms. Hunt is the president of the N.C. State Bar. She noted that the legislature charged the agency with regulating the legal profession in North Carolina. She also elaborated on the many programs of the State Bar. Representatives of the State Bar have been participating in the work of the NCCALJ to support its work of promoting greater access through technology, uniformity, more help for pro se litigants, etc. She outlined the current regulatory nature of the State Bar and noted that the state's supreme court already exercises a review and approval role. She commented that if changes are recommended, then the State Bar would be willing to work with those proposing change but the impacts to the system should be presented.
Cyndi Sprouse	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. Sprouse has more than 32 years in the legal field. She provided her personal experience of being in court more than 20 times in 1.5 years. On some occasions she had an attorney and other times she did not. She commented that the Chapter 50B process is difficult and she was only seeking protection from someone who violated a protective order. She also noted her feeling that the process seems to be in the defendant's favor and court systems don't talk to each other. Ms. Sprouse also discussed her experience with the juvenile system and noted that it catches people early and stays on top of them.
Marcia Davis	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. Davis is a licensed clinical social worker who spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18. She commented that children are an important national treasure, a part of our society, and their brains aren't developed until mid-20s. She commented that children are exposed to cultural factors like drugs, violent television, etc. She also noted that parents face many challenges and don't receive parenting classes. She wants to give children every chance possible and raise the age for most crimes to 18.
Joanne Scaturro	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. Scaturro is the co-chair of the State Collaborative for Children, Youth, and Families and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18. The collaborative has more than 300 members. Ms. Scaturro commented that the existing juvenile justice system helps children work through issues, but adult offenders don't receive needed intervention and family support. If youth enter the adult system they are marred for life when searching for jobs, housing, and college scholarships. She also relayed the story of one young man who received juvenile justice services and is now a productive member of society. Ms. Scaturro also commented that the system should love children and use the information we have to support their growth into adulthood.

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Andrea Dray	Judicial Branch	Asheville	Judge Dray spoke in support of expanded family court to all judicial districts who wish to participate. She noted that 96.7% of family court cases are resolved within one year of filing in Buncombe County. The court helps resolve issues and through the work of additional family court staff they are able to offer tools that aren't always available to others outside the system. She noted that discussion of cases and numbers are really families who are dependent of courts. Family court can coordinate services such as custody mediation and provides continuity through a one judge/one family model. The familiarity with the family means that children are seen and heard.
Marian Plaut	General Public/Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. Plaut is a volunteer with Pisgah Legal Services and noted that the agency serves the most vulnerable and fragile people. She frequently sees people in fear of eviction, people with a landlord refusing to make repairs, and people who don't receive their security deposit. She provided examples of a client experiences such as a family whose landlord failed to make repairs which led to contaminated water and illness. Ms. Plaut also noted that the fear of losing housing is great and there is a two year waiting list for public housing. She encouraged commission to support increased funding for agencies like Pisgah Legal Services.
Tom Plaut	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Mr. Plaut is a volunteer with Pisgah Legal Services who helps with wills and power of attorney documents. He noted that clients usually have limited understanding of the complexity of issues they face, and agencies like Pisgah Legal Services track people away from civil court. Social services and universities also present opportunities to take pressure off of the courts. He encouraged the court system to look for volunteer resources to navigate the complex system.
William Whalen	Attorney	Asheville	Mr. Whalen is a staff attorney with Pisgah Legal Services and has a consumer law focus. He commented that the agency can make a difference in areas from constitutional rights to client dignity. In the past year, 300 volunteers assisted more than 3,000 people with civil law issues. If the agency had additional administrative funding then they could expand programs to serve more people.
Todd Williams	Judicial Branch/ District Attorney	Asheville	Mr. Williams is the District Attorney for Buncombe County. He spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He noted that North Carolina is currently an outlier in its law to maintain juvenile jurisdiction through age 16, and the system has not kept pace with federal jurisprudence. He supports raising the juvenile age with automatic transfer for A through E felonies that have probable cause. He believes is a sound fiscal decision and maintains better options for juveniles. He commented that we should make North Carolina a safer state and let's not be the last to make the change.

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Ben Many	Attorney	Asheville	Mr. Many is an attorney with Pisgah Legal Services. He spoke in support of increased funding for NC LEAF so that it can continue helping public service attorneys pay back student loans. He noted that he has walked away from other private law opportunities because of NC LEAF support. He has closed 1,100 cases in four years but he doesn't get paid much. He appreciates the commission's recommendation to increase funding for NC LEAF.
Michelle Zechmann	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. Zechmann is the Executive Director of Haven House Services and she spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18. She commented that this topic directly impacts the lives of children and families. She feels it is one of the most important ways to strengthen families, lower recidivism rates, and make communities safer.
Evie White	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Ms. White works with Pisgah Legal Services and spoke in support of increased funding for civil legal services. Ms. White shared the letter of a former client who experienced domestic violence. During one 72 hour ordeal the client was behind locked doors, strangled, pistol whipped, and threatened with death. The abuser eventually passed out and received numerous criminal charges. The victim credited Pisgah Legal Services with helping get a Chapter 50B protective order and put her at ease throughout the process. She commented that she couldn't have faced the abuser on her own. Today, the victim has been able to return to work in the education field.
Chuck Mallonee	DPS Juvenile Justice	Asheville	Mr. Mallonee works with the juvenile justice division of the Department of Public Safety, and he spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18. He encourage commission members to speak with other juvenile staff in attendance after the meeting. He noted that the work of juvenile justice in outcomes is well documented. He commented that raising the juvenile age is the right thing to do only if the juvenile justice system is provided with the appropriate resources, and juvenile justice staff should be trusted to know what they need to accomplish the task. He encouraged the commission to advocate that the additional responsibility for juvenile justice be give with resources.
Jacob Ehrmann	Attorney	Asheville	Mr. Ehrmann operates a small family law firm. After his initial reading of the potential changes to judicial selection he was opposed but he later recognized the possible benefits. He is concerned by the current polarization of politics. Judges have a high standard to interpret the law. An appointment process could be a positive option allowing judges to focus on law and make decisions that may be unpopular. He did encourage the commission to think about more options than just appointment.

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Jim Barrett	Attorney	Asheville	Mr. Barrett is the Executive Director of Pisgah Legal Services. He noted that the state now provides less funding to his agency than the county. He suggested that the state should give ten times the amount currently provided, and with additional resources, the agency could screen and help more people. He commented that agencies providing timely legal services can resolve many social problems, and without these services a child's education can be impacted, people can become homeless, and some may die. He also asked for additional state funding for NC LEAF to help retain capable attorneys.
Shari Rogers	Court Reporter	Asheville	Ms. Rogers is the co-chair of the realtime committee of the Official Court Reporters Association. She pointed out that the lack of wireless internet in a courtroom is a barrier. With this type of service, information from an official court reporter using realtime would be accessible to others in court.
Brad Letts	Judicial Branch/ Superior Court Judge	Asheville	Judge Letts spoke in support of using official court reporters in superior court and in TPR proceedings for abuse/neglect/dependency proceedings because transcription from tapes can be difficult. Judge Letts also stressed the importance of public defender offices. He noted that in his experience, on average, they provide better representation, more access to judges, and they are more cost efficient. Judge Letts also commented that specialty courts are important. He noted that people in one county may have access to a specialty court while residents of a neighboring county may not. He suggested that the cost benefit analysis shows that the initial spending provides good results.
Marvin Pope	Judicial Branch/ Superior Court Judge	Asheville	Mr. Pope spoke in support of realtime court reporting, noting it is helpful to judges. He also supported technological innovations that would move us along for a nominal sum. He commented that he was a court reporter 45 years ago and times haven't changed much. Mr. Pope also stressed the importance of specialty courts because there is a need to change the way we do things for the individual. Mr. Pope reported that in his district the regular court recidivism rate is 60% and the drug court recidivism rate is 30%. He encourage the adoption of more specialty courts.
Curry First	Retired	Asheville	Mr. First works with N.C. Prison Legal Services and is a proud grandfather of a 16 year old child. He commented that juveniles in adult facilities are more likely to be sexually assaulted, more likely to be beaten by guards, and they have a higher suicide rate. North Carolina doesn't allow 16 year olds to vote or join the military, but in criminal justice they are considered adults. Medical professionals and psychologists recognize that youth of this age do not have the abilities of an adult. The Supreme Court has already addressed this matter for capital cases. North Carolina should raise the juvenile age quickly.

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Robert Stiehl	Judicial Branch/ Chief District Judge	Asheville	Judge Stiehl spoke in support of the expansion of family court. He is in his sixth term with experience in juvenile court, sobriety court, family court, etc. He noted that he drove five hours to convey the importance of family court. Family Court has existed more than 16 yrs., and it provides access for pro se litigants, expert judges, and timely decisions. Family Court is a convergence of issues for things such as children, families, and jobs. He encouraged commissions that as they examine the issue of raising the juvenile age for 16 and 17 year old children to not lose sight of family court as an interconnected service addressing similar matters.
Pamela Genant	Moms Rising	Asheville	Ms. Genant spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18. She is a member of Moms Rising, a nonprofit agency working to ensure economic security for families and children. The agency has more than 41,000 members in North Carolina. She is also the mother of two boys, now 19 and 22. She is saddened to think that they could have been charged as adult if they made a mistake, and it is difficult to think of them in an adult facility. She noted youth should receive better treatment, and they need healthy restorative services.
Beth Herman	Pisgah Legal Services	Asheville	Ms. Herman works with Pisgah Legal Services and supports additional funding for civil legal aid services. She conveyed the story of a paraplegic veteran facing immediate eviction. By the time the gentleman called the Pisgah Legal Services it was past the point of legal intervention, but an agency attorney secured funds from a local charity to pay back rent and halt the eviction. This is an example of how those without resources often need legal assistance the most.
Greg Borom	Children First/Communities In Schools	Asheville	Mr. Borom works with Communities in Schools, and he spoke in support of raising the age. The juvenile justice system offers an opportunity for young people to correct course. North Carolina is one of only two states that have not yet raised the juvenile age to 18. Brain research and economic impact show it is the right thing.
Phillip Gibson	General Public/ Private Citizen	Asheville	Mr. Gibson relayed his experience as a father to a 17 year old adopted son. Due to the child's experience before being adopted by Mr. Gibson, the child has post traumatic stress disorder and reactive attachment disorder. Mr. Gibson left a Ph.D. program to care for his son. Through the process he learned that "the system sucks," and they removed themselves from the system because it fails to address needs. He recommends that all foster and adoptive parents receive free additional training online.
Jennifer Nehlsen	Guardian ad Litem	Asheville	Ms. Nehlsen is a District Administrator for the Guardian ad Litem Program in Buncombe County which serves 400 abused and neglected children with 185 volunteers. She has seen firsthand that when a child is in both A/N/D court and delinquency court a volunteer and juvenile justice staff are able to collaborate to ensure appropriate supportive services. When a child is involved in A/N/D court and the adult criminal system it is difficult for the volunteer to assist the child. Ms. Nehlsen encouraged the commission to take action that will improve the efficacy of all courts working with juveniles.

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Melissa Murphy	Public School Teacher	Asheville	Ms. Murphy spoke as a supporter of raising the juvenile age. Although not representing any particular institution, she is a public school teacher who has seen elementary students go on to college. She has also seen students make bad decisions in adolescents which can sometimes be attributed to their environment. She noted that it is time for North Carolina to catch up to the rest of the country.