

Speaker's Name	Affiliation	Location	Comment Highlights
Ricky Watson Jr.	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Watson works with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice in Durham, and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He was formerly a practicing attorney in the role of both assistant district attorney and assistant public defender. In those capacities he spent time in juvenile court. He commented that juvenile court offers a holistic approach where all parties care about positive outcomes for the child. They have a shared understanding that the court is dealing with children who need treatment and services. He believes juvenile court offers a different level of attention to detail and the adult system does not provide the same experience. Juvenile court places limits on children and tries to ensure they will not recidivate.
Nancy Butler	Judicial Branch/ Family Court	Jamestown	Ms. Butler is a family court administrator who spoke in support of expanding family court statewide. She noted that there is a waiting list for districts who would like to implement family court. She commented that family court is accessible, efficient, provides case management, assists pro se litigants, and provides timely disposition of cases. She pointed out that these tenets are consistent items the NCCALJ stressed as important in recent reports. Ms. Butler also mentioned prior to becoming the FCA she practiced as an attorney for 10 years in South Carolina. When she began as the FCA 60% of cases were older than 1 year and now only 13% are pending. The N.C. Bar Journal reported that family court was the most important item that came out of the Medlin Commission, and Ms. Butler encouraged the NCCALJ to take that foundation and help expand family court in other places.
Jason Idilbi	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Idilbi is a licensed attorney and expressed his concern about the current election process for judges. He indicated that qualified people may be deterred from running by the current partisan system that requires expensive campaigning in a highly public environment. He favors a judicial selection system that includes a nomination and confirmation process involving the judicial and legislative branches followed by retention elections.
Mark Fuhrman	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Fuhrman spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He was formerly a practicing attorney in Connecticut, has worked in children services, and is now a special education teacher in a high school. He has witnessed the damaging interaction for youth in the adult justice system. The adult system disrupts academic progress while the juvenile system has less impact on permanent record.
Steve Robertson	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Robertson is an attorney and counselor for the 18th judicial district of the State Bar. He appreciates and supports the work of the commission. He noted the attendance and participation of the State Bar at NCCALJ committee meetings. He believes the promotion of greater access and more targeted resources for self-represented litigants deserves support. He also indicated that the current regulatory structure of the State Bar works well, and if changes are suggested, then the burden of proof should be on those who advocate change.

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Susanna Birdsong	Attorney	Jamestown	Ms. Birdsong is policy counsel with the ACLU and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She noted the fiscal savings and better outcomes associated with raising the age. She also provided a personal story about a 16 year old who stole her car and he now has a felony record. She commented that he is more likely to recidivate since he was in the adult system. She also pointed out that the medical community has indicated brain development is not complete at this age.
Tina Sherman	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Sherman is a member of Moms Rising and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She noted that North Carolina is one of only two states that hasn't raised the age. She commented that the current law means one poor decision can result in a long term issue. The juvenile justice system provides intensive services and is more effective at reducing recidivism.
Barbara Christy	Attorney	Jamestown	Ms. Christy is an attorney and counselor for the 18th judicial district the State Bar. She indicated that the State Bar is not a self-interested agency. The State Bar has a high level of professionalism and dedication to the administration of justice. She noted that the current system works, and it is in place to protect the public not the profession. She also commented that after reviewing the dental board case, she feels strongly that the current structure is within statutory guidelines. She also noted the agency's collaboration with the legislature for Legal Zoom legislation. She encouraged the NCCALJ to move forward under the assumption that the current system works and it wants to make the profession better for the public.
Jim Garrison	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Garrison spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He provided a personal story of his son who made a mistake at age 16 years old by committing a nonviolent offense and now that conviction follows him. Mr. Garrison believes children have special needs and should be treated differently. In 48 other states his son would have been treated differently and would have received different services in the juvenile justice system. Mr. Garrison noted that research and science confirm that youth under 18 are still children. He commented that raising the juvenile age to 18 years old is in the best interests of children and the community.
Michelle Young	General Public/Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Young runs a gang intervention program for 18-24 year olds, and she spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She also described the story of her 17 year old son who was charged with felony possession to sell and distribute marijuana. He was incarcerated with adults, but thanks to their middle class status, their son received good representation and the prosecution was deferred. He still must answer yes to questions related to criminal charges for schools, jobs, apartments, etc. Ms. Young noted that her son would have received different services in the juvenile justice system. She also commented that the impact of raising the age is broad for all children.

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Bill Womble Jr.	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Womble thanked the Public Trust and Confidence Committee for raising the issue of how we elect judges. He described that as an attorney he often receives questions from potential voters seeking a recommendation or information about a judicial election. He noted that many people may not ask questions and may vote based on funds put in a campaign. Mr. Womble supports changing the current system used for selecting judges.
Jalen Lyons	General Public/Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Lyons spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He provided his personal story of being sent to juvenile detention at 15 yrs. old and later transferred to an adult facility at 17 years old. His friends who were charged as adults spent their entire time in an adult facility. Mr. Lyons believes his experience allowed him to see both sides of the issue. He commented that the juvenile justice system provided rehabilitative services, an opportunity to make plans, and the chance to better himself. His counterparts in the adult system didn't have those same options, and they were sitting there with no hope.
Lao Rubert	General Public/Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Rubert spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She noted the 2011 Vera Institute study which estimated \$123 million in benefits to the state for raising the age. She indicated that total benefits are double the implementation costs, and there are major benefits for local jails. She noted costs are going down because of juvenile justice practices in planning and resourcing, YDC costs are down, community supervision costs are down, and there are fewer convictions.
Adam Sotak	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Sotak works with NC Child and the NC Child Advocacy Network and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age as an evidence-based policy decision. He believes the juvenile justice system is the best place for young offenders since it provides age-appropriate punishment and services. Mr. Sotak pointed to the successes that Connecticut has experienced since its 2007 law change. He was encouraged to see the involvement of a broad group of stakeholders, and he hopes the NCCALJ members will stand beside advocates to encourage lawmakers to join 48 other states who have already raised the age.
Jim O'Neill	Judicial Branch/ District Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. O'Neill spoke in support of changing the selection process for well-qualified judges in favor of an appointment process. He noted that it is difficult for private attorneys to give up their livelihood in hopes that they might get re-elected. Mr. O'Neill also spoke on the topic of raising the juvenile age and suggested giving district attorneys the flexibility to bind over youth charged with violent crimes or A through G felonies as a way to protect citizens.
Carnell Hicks	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Hicks implored the NCCALJ to include the recommendation to restore funding to NC LEAF in its final report. He believes it will help recruit and retain quality attorneys in the public sector.
Sharon Ozment	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Ozment believes an appointment process for judges would be better than the current selection process. She commented that voters need relevant and reliable information, and she suggested possible linkages to low voter turnout. She also suggested that opportunities for women and minority groups should be included.

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Alan Duncan	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Duncan believes that an uniformed voter electorate and current campaign funding has hurt the credibility of the judiciary. He wants the best possible candidates for judges and justices who follow the law. He noted that the appointment process is not perfect but he supports the use of a bipartisan group of people. Mr. Duncan also commented that civic education is a great goal, but he cautioned that topics which aren't tested are often not emphasized and caution should be taken in determining the correct way to implement a civics education mandate.
Brian Shipwash	Judicial Branch	Jamestown	Mr. Shipwash spoke in opposition to pretrial release programs. He noted that the programs don't save money, and he thinks the NCCALJ has failed to hear from school boards who benefit from bond forfeitures. He commented that he was promised equal time to present information to the NCCALJ criminal committee, but he has not yet received that opportunity. He suggested that the criminal committee has already formed an opinion. He also thinks that other topics would be better served by the criminal committee of the NCCALJ.
Michael Rieder	DPS - DACJJ	Jamestown	Mr. Rieder spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. He noted that systemic changes can work, and he pointed to juvenile justice's use of best practices, decision making tools and reductions in detention admissions (he reports that admissions have declined 40% in recent years). He commented that with planning and proper resources the juvenile justice system can make this happen, and he stressed the urgency to address this issue for individual lives of young people.
Bill Davis	Judicial Branch	Jamestown	Mr. Davis spoke in support of raising the juvenile age, and he encouraged the NCCALJ and others attending to encourage the N.C. General Assembly to make changes. He noted that 16 and 17 year old youth are not able to make mature decisions that will be on their permanent records and will impact their life forever. He suggested that integrating courts with family services is better for children and helps put them on a positive path. He also pointed out youth entering the adult system lose education and employment opportunities. Mr. Davis believes this issue is one of fundamental justice for young people and is more than economics, policy, etc.
Daniel Yemiola	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Yemiola worked as a law enforcement officer for many years. He commented that the members of the NCCALJ are from high levels in their respective fields. He noted that bailiffs and deputy clerks are responsible for implementing ideas and understand the nuts and bolts of the courts. He suggested that the NCCALJ should add those type of members. Mr. Yemiola is also concerned that judges are not in control of the docket, particularly in civil court. He added that rotation adds to the problem and better control reduce the time a case is pending. He also commented that judges need an assistant to help with that process.

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Ernie Wittenborn	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Wittenborn spoke in opposition to the proposed recommendation changing the process for judicial selection. He commented that the change moves selection out of the hands of voters. He suggested that the appointment group would not be nonpartisan, small committees are subject to groupthink, and selection committees are subject to influence by outside groups. He suggested that New York was not successful in its shift away from traditional elections and the NCCALJ should rethink its recommendation. He does agree that retention elections are worth considering.
Jackie Freeman	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Freeman provide her story of being on a pro se calendar for two years for her civil case to obtain child support from a non-custodial parent. She noted that she can't afford an attorney and she finds it difficult to understand the process. She also feels that she isn't allowed to talk in court.
Rick Manger	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Manger spoke in support of changing the current selection process for judges. He indicated that most citizens don't know about judges, but he also noted that he is not a believer in a process of appointment by elected officials. He suggested that district court judges could be nominated by the local Bar. Three names could be submitted to the governor and he/she must choose from the list. Reappointment would then be made by the same local Bar group. Appellate judges would require a wide group of attorneys and non-attorneys to start the selection process.
Twana Roebuck	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Roebuck works with Experiment in Self-Reliance and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She noted the challenges of employment and housing faced by young people with felony records. Ms. Roebuck spoke about the procedure of judge selection and the power of persuasion through commercials.
Shawn Fraley	Attorney	Jamestown	Mr. Fraley commented that the current judicial selection process is fine. He noted that he doesn't want selection removed from the hands of the public and put in the power of a few using the justification that they wouldn't be political or that they are smarter. Mr. Fraley also spoke in support of keeping official court reporters. He noted that the federal system and several other states tried and abandoned the removal process.
Clavette Sutton	Emotions	Jamestown	Ms. Sutton works for the betterment of youth and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age. She spoke of the need to dismantle the school to prison pipeline and remove school resource officers from schools. She also encouraged teaching children ethics in schools.
Beth Messersmith	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Ms. Messersmith is a member of Moms Rising and spoke in support of raising the juvenile age to 18 years old. She noted that the brain of a 16 year old is not fully developed to make decisions, North Carolina is branding youth with a criminal record, and putting youth at a disadvantage with other states' children. The juvenile justice system offers treatment, involves parents, reduces recidivism, and creates cost savings. She said we should start by seeking to solve the situations these kids are getting into, not to simply treat them as adults in the criminal system.

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Carolyn Woodruff	Attorney	Jamestown	Ms. Woodruff is an attorney specializing in family law. She spoke in support of funding family court in every county. She noted that family court provides parties with the time they should arrive and the time they will finish; making it more efficient. Ms. Woodruff also supports equitable distribution cases with more than \$500,000 being handled by business court. Ms. Woodruff also commented that juvenile court has some of the most vulnerable citizens but there is too much secrecy. She suggests juvenile court become an open court and go back to the using standard rules of evidence and rules of civil procedure.
Mack Arrington	General Public/ Private Citizen	Jamestown	Mr. Arrington commented that citizens don't have time or resources to be informed about government. He also expressed a lack of trust in allowing elected officials or a few individuals to make appointments. He noted a preference for a bipartisan group of 12 or more members to select judges. He also wishes it was easier to become informed about the judicial system and judicial candidates, and he suggested that a website might be helpful.
Ryan Kokajko	Judicial Branch/ Magistrate	Jamestown	Mr. Kokajko is a magistrate in Guilford County. He suggested the NCCALJ explore the opportunity to create an application that defendants could download and receive texts about upcoming court dates on a cellphone. He suggests this could reduce the number of failures to appear.