

**18 SEPTEMBER 2025**  
**ORDER OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE**  
**OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA**

North Carolinians have entrusted the Judicial Branch with administering justice without favor, denial, or delay for the benefit of all North Carolina's citizens. In administering justice, public safety is of the utmost concern. When our citizens feel safe, they thrive physically, relationally, economically, and spiritually. It is my priority to ensure that we, as a Judicial Branch, execute our responsibilities well and strive continuously to improve our efforts to administer justice.

The practices and procedures of pretrial release should comply with the law and adequately protect the public. Disturbing recent events call for a comprehensive statewide review of pretrial release and the pretrial release practices and policies employed in each of the jurisdictions within the state. To do so, I have created the Pretrial Release Task Force, to be co-chaired by The Honorable Phil Berger, Jr., Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, and The Honorable R. Stuart Albright, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge.

In addition to Justice Berger and Judge Albright, representatives from the Judicial Branch and other relevant stakeholder groups will serve as valued members of the task force, including but not limited to:

- 1) a Superior Court Judge;
- 2) a District Court Judge;
- 3) an elected Clerk of Superior Court;
- 4) an elected District Attorney;
- 5) a representative from the Conference of District Attorneys;
- 6) a District Public Defender;
- 7) a representative from Indigent Defense Services;
- 8) at least one representative from the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts;
- 9) at least one representative from the North Carolina Magistrates Association;
- 10) at least one representative from the law enforcement community, including both Chiefs of Police and Elected Sheriffs;
- 11) representatives from the bail bond industry; and
- 12) victims of crimes.

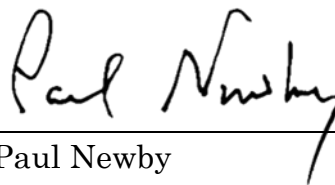
The Pretrial Release Task Force is charged with the following tasks:

- 1) survey and assess our current practice and procedure regarding pretrial release among the various North Carolina jurisdictions, including any local policies;
- 2) evaluate whether these practices and procedures comply with N.C.G.S. § 15A-534 and other relevant statutory provisions;
- 3) compare the current statutory framework for pretrial release decision making with the twin priorities of public safety and the protection of victims and consider whether the current framework adequately protects the public;
- 4) evaluate whether these practices and procedures adequately balance the need for judicial discretion with the need for consistency in decision making;
- 5) produce a guide that outlines the best practices for pretrial release to assist Judicial Branch stakeholders; and
- 6) if needed, make recommendations for legislative consideration to reform the practice and procedure of pretrial release.

The Pretrial Release Task Force is requested to work efficiently to provide an assessment and recommendations as soon as possible, but no later than one year from the date of this order.

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This order becomes effective upon issuance. Issued this the 18th day of September, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Newby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Paul" is written with a large, looped 'P'. The last name "Newby" is written with a large, looped 'N' and a trailing flourish.

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Paul Newby  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court of North Carolina