

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021**

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**SENATE BILL 837**

Short Title: State Bar/Investigation/Atty. Fees. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lee, Fitch, and Britt (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 27, 2022

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ALLOW FOR THE AWARD OF REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES FOR  
LICENSEES OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR IF NOT DISCIPLINED AFTER  
A HEARING AND TO REDUCE STATE BAR MEMBERSHIP FEES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 84-28 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 84-28. Discipline and disbarment.**

...

(d2) An attorney who is the respondent in an action before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission or the Grievance Committee and found to have not committed acts or omissions constituting misconduct under this section shall be awarded reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in that action before the North Carolina State Bar. This subsection applies only to complaints heard before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission and grievances heard before the Grievance Committee in which probable cause is found and a hearing is necessary or when a hearing is requested before the Grievance Committee by the respondent. This subsection shall not apply to complaints or grievances (i) dismissed, (ii) dismissed with a letter of warning or a letter of caution, or (iii) settlements entered into between the North Carolina State Bar and the attorney to conclude an action.

...."

**SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 84-34 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 84-34. Membership fees and list of members.**

Every active member of the North Carolina State Bar shall, prior to the first day of July of each year, pay to the secretary-treasurer an annual membership fee in an amount determined by the Council but not to exceed ~~three hundred dollars (\$300.00)~~, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) and every member shall notify the secretary-treasurer of the member's correct mailing address. Any member who fails to pay the required dues by the last day of June of each year shall be subject to a late fee in an amount determined by the Council but not to exceed thirty dollars (\$30.00). All dues for prior years shall be as were set forth in the General Statutes then in effect. The membership fee shall be regarded as a service charge for the maintenance of the several services authorized by this Article, and shall be in addition to all fees required in connection with admissions to practice, and in addition to all license taxes required by law. The fee shall not be prorated: Provided, that no fee shall be required of an attorney licensed after this Article shall have gone into effect until the first day of January of the calendar year following that in which the attorney was licensed; but this proviso shall not apply to attorneys from other states admitted on certificate. The fees shall be disbursed by the secretary-treasurer on the order of the Council. The secretary-treasurer shall annually, at a time and in a law magazine or daily newspaper to be



1 prescribed by the Council, publish an account of the financial transactions of the Council in a  
2 form to be prescribed by it. The secretary-treasurer shall compile and keep currently correct from  
3 the names and mailing addresses forwarded to the secretary-treasurer and from any other  
4 available sources of information a list of members of the North Carolina State Bar and furnish to  
5 the clerk of the superior court in each county, not later than the first day of October in each year,  
6 a list showing the name and address of each attorney for that county who has not complied with  
7 the provisions of this Article. The name of each of the active members who are in arrears in the  
8 payment of membership fees shall be furnished to the presiding judge at the next term of the  
9 superior court after the first day of October of each year, by the clerk of the superior court of  
10 each county wherein the member or members reside, and the court shall thereupon take action  
11 that is necessary and proper. The names and addresses of attorneys so certified shall be kept  
12 available to the public. The Secretary of Revenue is hereby directed to supply the  
13 secretary-treasurer, from records of license tax payments, with any information for which the  
14 secretary-treasurer may call in order to enable the secretary-treasurer to comply with this  
15 requirement.

16 The list submitted to several clerks of the superior court shall also be submitted to the Council  
17 at its October meeting of each year and it shall take the action thereon that is necessary and  
18 proper."

19 **SECTION 1.(c)** The North Carolina State Bar shall adopt temporary rules to  
20 implement this section.

21 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2022, and applies to licenses  
22 issued, renewed, or revoked on or after that date.