

House Bill 665 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representative Maddox of the 127th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Titles 9, 15, and 44, Chapter 18 of Title 50, and Code Section 36-9-5 of the
2 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to civil practice, courts, property, state printing
3 and documents, and storage of documents, respectively, so as to modernize provisions
4 relating to storage, collection, access, and transmittal of documents housed in clerk of
5 superior court offices; to provide for modern technological advances in electronic record
6 keeping; to provide for storage of depositions; to allow superior court clerks to serve as
7 clerks in other courts; to change provisions relating to the selection of the clerk of court when
8 a vacancy occurs; to increase the bond required by the clerk of court; to change provisions
9 relating to the clerk's duties; to change provisions relating to recordation and display of maps
10 and plats; to change provisions relating to destruction of obsolete records and preservation
11 of newspapers with legal advertisements; to change provisions relating to payment of costs;
12 to remove provisions relating to punishment of clerks; to change provisions relating to the
13 process for removal of clerks; to change provisions relating to the location of clerk's offices
14 and office hours; to remove the fee system; to change provisions relating to cases transferred
15 from magistrate to state or superior courts; to repeal provisions relating to disposition of
16 books; to change provisions relating to recording property records; to change provisions
17 relating to the release of a lien upon the filing of a bond; to change provisions relating to
18 inspection of records; to change provisions relating to microform standards; to amend Code
19 Section 1-3-1, Title 15, and Title 42 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
20 construction of statutes generally, courts, and penal institutions, respectively, so as to
21 conform provisions and correct cross-references; to amend Chapter 12 of Title 15 of the
22 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to juries, so as to clarify that certain persons
23 shall be ineligible to serve as trial or grand jurors; to provide for the use of jurors summoned
24 prior to the compilation of county master jury lists; to revise provisions relating to the
25 qualifications of grand jurors; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and
26 for other purposes.

27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

H. B. 665

28 **PART I**

29 **SECTION 1-1.**

30 Title 9 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to civil practice, is amended by
 31 revising Code Section 9-11-29.1, relating to when depositions and other discovery material
 32 must be filed with court and custodian until filing, as follows:

33 "9-11-29.1.

34 (a) Depositions and other discovery material otherwise required to be filed with the court
 35 under this chapter shall not be required to be so filed unless:

36 (1) Required by local rule of court;

37 (2) Ordered by the court;

38 (3) Requested by any party to the action;

39 (4) Relief relating to discovery material is sought under this chapter and said material has
 40 not previously been filed under some other provision of this chapter, in which event
 41 copies of the material in dispute shall be filed by the movant contemporaneously with the
 42 motion for relief; or

43 (5) Such material is to be used at trial or is necessary to a pretrial or posttrial motion and
 44 said material has not previously been filed under some other provision of this chapter, in
 45 which event the portions to be used shall be filed with the clerk of ~~the~~ court at the outset
 46 of the trial or at the filing of the motion, insofar as their use can be reasonably anticipated
 47 by the parties having custody thereof, but a party attempting to file and use such material
 48 which was not filed with the clerk at the outset of the trial or at the filing of the motion
 49 shall show to the satisfaction of the court, before the court may authorize such filing and
 50 use, that sufficient reasons exist to justify that late filing and use and that the late filing
 51 and use will not constitute surprise or manifest injustice to any other party in the
 52 proceedings.

53 (b) Until such time as discovery material is filed under paragraphs (1) through (5) of
 54 subsection (a) of this Code section, the original of all depositions shall be retained by the
 55 party taking the deposition and the original of all other discovery material shall be retained
 56 by the party requesting such material, and the person thus retaining the deposition or other
 57 discovery material shall be the custodian thereof.

58 (c) When depositions and other discovery material are filed with the clerk of court as
 59 provided in subsection (a) of this Code section, the clerk of court shall retain such original
 60 documents and materials until final disposition, either by verdict or appeal, of the action
 61 in which such materials were filed. The clerk of court shall be authorized thereafter to
 62 destroy such materials upon microfilming or digitally imaging such materials and
 63 maintaining such materials in a manner that facilitates retrieval and reproduction, so long

64 as the microfilm and digital images meet the standards established by the Georgia
 65 Department of Archives and History; provided, however, that the clerk of court shall not
 66 be required to microfilm or digitally image depositions that are not used for evidentiary
 67 purposes during the trial of the issues of the case in which such depositions were filed."

68 **SECTION 1-2.**

69 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 9-12-81, relating to
 70 the general execution docket, as follows:

71 "(a) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court of each county shall be required to keep a general
 72 execution docket in paper or electronic data base form."

73 **SECTION 1-3.**

74 Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to courts, is amended by revising
 75 Code Section 15-6-51, relating to eligibility to serve as city or state court clerk, as follows:

76 "15-6-51.

77 ~~Clerks~~ The clerk of the superior courts court shall be eligible to hold the office of clerk of
 78 the ~~city or~~ municipal, state, or other court in the counties of their residence, on taking the
 79 oath and giving bond and security as prescribed by law."

80 **SECTION 1-4.**

81 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-53, relating to appointment of
 82 clerk by presiding judge, as follows:

83 "15-6-53.

84 ~~(a) If there is an absence or if the clerk or his deputy for any reason does not act as clerk~~
 85 ~~at the time provided by law for holding a term of the superior courts, the presiding judge~~
 86 ~~thereof shall appoint a clerk who shall hold the office of clerk during the term and for ten~~
 87 ~~days thereafter. Any act which the appointed clerk does during such time which the clerk~~
 88 ~~could have done shall be valid. In any county in which a chief deputy clerk has been~~
 89 ~~appointed pursuant to Code Section 15-6-59, the chief deputy clerk shall become the clerk~~
 90 ~~of superior court if the clerk of superior court dies, resigns, is removed from office pursuant~~
 91 ~~to the provisions of Code Section 45-2-1, or otherwise vacates office. The chief deputy~~
 92 ~~clerk shall hold office for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor, provided that more~~
 93 ~~than two years of the clerk's term of office have expired at the time the clerk vacates office.~~
 94 ~~If more than two years of the clerk's term of office have not expired at the time the clerk~~
 95 ~~vacates office, a special election shall be held, as provided in subsection (c) of Code~~
 96 ~~Section 21-2-540, at least 120 days but no later than 365 days after the date the vacancy~~
 97 ~~occurred. The person elected on such date shall hold office for the unexpired term of his~~

98 or her predecessor. The returns of the election shall be made to the Governor, who shall
 99 immediately commission the person elected clerk.

100 (b)(1) In any county in which a chief deputy clerk has not been appointed pursuant to
 101 Code Section 15-6-59, the probate judge shall immediately appoint a qualified person to
 102 serve as the interim clerk of superior court when the clerk vacates office for any reason.
 103 Such interim clerk shall serve in such capacity until the vacancy is filled pursuant to the
 104 provisions of this subsection; provided, however, that the interim clerk shall not serve
 105 more than one year. Any act done by the interim clerk during such period that the clerk
 106 could have done shall be valid. If, by the expiration of the time specified, there is no one
 107 else to act as clerk, the appointee mentioned in subsection (a) of this Code section may
 108 continue as such until there is an appointment or election. Any appointee or other person
 109 lawfully discharging the clerk's duties shall continue to do so until there is an election and
 110 qualification.

111 (2) When a vacancy is filled pursuant to paragraph (1) of this Code section and it is more
 112 than six months from the date when the clerk vacated office until the next general
 113 election is held, the election superintendent for the county shall call a special election to
 114 fill the vacancy, as provided in subsection (c) of Code Section 21-2-540, and such official
 115 shall give notice in one or more of the public newspapers of the county, if any, at the
 116 courthouse, and at three or more of the most public places of the county at least 30 days
 117 prior to the date of election. Such special election shall be held at least 120 days but no
 118 later than 365 days after the date the vacancy occurred. The person elected on such date
 119 shall hold office for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor. The returns of the
 120 election shall be made to the Governor, who shall immediately commission the person
 121 elected clerk."

122 **SECTION 1-5.**

123 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-54, relating to the appointment
 124 by probate judge pending filling of vacancy and duration of appointment, as follows:

125 "15-6-54.

126 ~~(a) As soon as a vacancy in the office of superior court clerk occurs or in anticipation of~~
 127 ~~such a vacancy, the judge of the probate court must appoint some qualified person to~~
 128 ~~discharge the duties of clerk until the vacancy is filled.~~

129 ~~(b) When a vacancy occurs and it is not more than six months from the time the election~~
 130 ~~can be called by the judge of the probate court and held until the existing term will expire,~~
 131 ~~the person or persons appointed shall discharge the duties of the office for the balance of~~
 132 ~~the term and there shall be no special election Reserved."~~

133 **SECTION 1-6.**

134 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-55, relating to emergency service
135 by the probate court judge or clerk, as follows:

136 "15-6-55.

137 (a) If ~~from~~ as a result of any sudden emergency there is a vacancy in the office of clerk of
138 superior court, and a proper person who meets the qualifications for a clerk of superior
139 court as set forth in Code Section 15-6-50 cannot immediately ~~be appointed~~ fill the vacancy
140 pursuant to Code Section 15-6-53, the judge of the probate court ~~or his clerk~~ shall act as
141 clerk of the superior court for a period not to exceed 120 days. Any act done by the
142 probate judge during such period that the clerk could have done shall be valid.

143 (b) If there is a temporary absence of the clerk of superior court for any reason not
144 specified in Code Section 15-6-53 or if the clerk of superior court for any reason does not
145 act as clerk at the time provided by law for holding a term of the superior courts and there
146 is no chief deputy clerk to perform such duties, notwithstanding local law, the judges of the
147 superior court of the judicial circuit by a majority vote shall appoint an interim deputy clerk
148 who shall hold the office of clerk during the term of court and for ten days thereafter. If
149 a majority of the judges do not agree to the selection of the interim deputy clerk, the chief
150 judge of the superior court shall select the interim deputy clerk. Any act which the chief
151 deputy clerk or the appointed clerk does during such time which the clerk could have done
152 shall be valid."

153 **SECTION 1-7.**

154 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-56, relating to election to fill
155 vacancy, term of office, and filling of vacancies in counties with chief deputy clerk, as
156 follows:

157 "15-6-56.

158 ~~(a) When a vacancy occurs or in anticipation of a vacancy, the judge of the probate court~~
159 ~~of the county where it happens shall give notice in one or more of the public newspapers~~
160 ~~of the county, if any, and at the courthouse, and at three or more of the most public places~~
161 ~~of the county 20 days prior to the date of election, which date shall be set by him.~~

162 ~~(b) The person elected on such date shall hold office for the unexpired term of his~~
163 ~~predecessor. The returns of the election must be made to the Governor, who must~~
164 ~~commission the clerk.~~

165 ~~(c) In any county in which the position of chief deputy clerk has been created by law or~~
166 ~~in which a chief deputy clerk has been appointed pursuant to Code Section 15-6-59, the~~
167 ~~chief deputy clerk shall succeed the clerk of the superior court if a vacancy occurs. The~~
168 ~~chief deputy clerk shall serve until January 1 following the next general election which is~~

169 ~~held more than 60 days after the date the vacancy occurs; provided, however, that in no~~
 170 ~~event shall the chief deputy clerk serve past the date that the successor is qualified~~
 171 ~~immediately upon the expiration of the term of office in which the vacancy was created.~~
 172 ~~If a portion of the original term will remain unexpired after January 1, then a person to fill~~
 173 ~~the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term shall be elected at such general~~
 174 ~~election. In any such case, the other provisions of law for filling such a vacancy shall not~~
 175 ~~apply. The provisions of this subsection shall only be applicable to the clerk of the superior~~
 176 ~~court and shall not be applicable to other county officers Reserved."~~

177 **SECTION 1-8.**

178 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 15-6-58, relating to
 179 oath of office, as follows:

180 "(a) The clerks of ~~the~~ superior courts, before entering upon the discharge of their duties,
 181 whether appointed, elected, or acting by operation of law besides the oath required of all
 182 civil officers, must take and subscribe to the following oath:

183 I do swear or affirm that I will truly and faithfully enter and record all the orders,
 184 decrees, judgments, and other proceedings of the Superior Court of the County of
 185 _____, and all other matters and things which I am required by law ~~ought by me to~~
 186 ~~be recorded~~ to record; and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all
 187 the duties required of me, to the best of my understanding. So help me God."

188 **SECTION 1-9.**

189 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-59, relating to bond and
 190 appointment of deputies, as follows:

191 "15-6-59.

192 (a) The ~~clerks~~ clerk of each of the superior courts, ~~except those appointed by a judge of~~
 193 ~~the superior court and those becoming clerk by operation of law~~, shall execute bond in the
 194 sum of ~~\$25,000.00~~ \$150,000.00, which amount may be increased in any county by local
 195 Act or by an ordinance or resolution of the governing authority.

196 (b) The clerks of ~~the~~ superior courts shall have the power to appoint a deputy or deputies
 197 and may, upon making such appointment, shall require from ~~him or them~~ such deputies a
 198 bond with good security. The deputies shall take the same oaths as the clerks do before
 199 entering upon the discharge of their duties. The oath shall be administered by the clerk of
 200 superior court and recorded on the minutes of the superior court. ~~Their powers~~ Powers and
 201 duties of deputy clerks shall be the same as those of the clerks, as long as their principals
 202 continue in office and not longer, for faithful performance of which they and their

203 securities shall be bound. The clerks of ~~the~~ superior courts shall also have the authority to
 204 appoint one of their deputies as chief deputy clerk ~~unless otherwise provided by local law."~~

205 **SECTION 1-10.**

206 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-61, relating to duties of clerks
 207 generally, use of computerized record-keeping system, and printed copies of the grantor and
 208 grantee indices, as follows:

209 "15-6-61.

210 (a) It is the duty of a clerk of superior court:

211 (1) To keep the clerk's office and all things belonging thereto at the county site and at the
 212 courthouse or at such other place or places as authorized by law;

213 (2) To attend to the needs of the court ~~in~~ through the performance of the duties of the
 214 clerk required and enumerated by law, or as defined in court order, or rules;

215 (3) To issue and sign every summons, writ, execution, process, order, or other paper
 216 under authority of the court and attach seals thereto when necessary. The clerk shall be
 217 authorized to issue and sign under authority of the court any order to show cause in any
 218 pending litigation and any other order in the nature of a rule nisi, where no injunctive or
 219 extraordinary relief is granted;

220 (4) To keep in the clerk's office the following ~~dockets or books~~:

221 (A) An automated civil case management system which shall contain separate case
 222 number entries for all civil actions filed in the office of the clerk, including complaints,
 223 proceedings, Uniform Interstate Family Support Act actions, domestic relations,
 224 contempt actions, motions and modifications on closed civil actions, and all other
 225 actions civil in nature except adoptions;

226 (B) An automated criminal case management system which shall contain a summary
 227 record of all criminal indictments in which true bills are rendered and all criminal
 228 accusations filed in the office of ~~the~~ clerk of superior court. The criminal case
 229 management system shall contain entries of other matters of a criminal nature filed with
 230 the clerk, including quasi-civil proceedings and entries of cases which are ordered dead
 231 docketed at the discretion of the presiding judge and which shall be called only at the
 232 judge's pleasure. When a case is thus dead docketed, all witnesses who may have been
 233 subpoenaed therein shall be released from further attendance until resubpoenaed; and

234 (C) A docket, file, series of files, book or series of books, microfilm records, or
 235 electronic data base for recording all deeds, liens, executions, lis pendens, maps and
 236 plats, and all other documents concerning or evidencing title to real or personal
 237 property. When any other law of this state refers to a general execution docket, lis
 238 pendens docket, or attachment docket, such other law shall be deemed to refer to the

- 239 docket or other record or records provided for in this subparagraph, regardless of the
 240 format used to store such docket;
- 241 (5) To keep all the books, papers, dockets, and records belonging to the office with care
 242 and security and to keep the papers filed, arranged, numbered, and labeled, so as to be of
 243 easy reference;
- 244 (6) To keep at the clerk's office all publications of the laws of the United States furnished
 245 by the state and all publications of the laws and journals of this state, all statute laws and
 246 digests, this Code, which shall be paid for from county or law library funds, the Supreme
 247 Court and Court of Appeals reports, and all other law books or other public documents
 248 distributed to ~~him~~ the clerk, for the public's convenience; provided, however, that the
 249 clerk may consent that these publications be maintained in the public law library;
- 250 (7) To procure a substantial seal of office with the name of the court and the county
 251 inscribed thereon, ~~if this has not already been done;~~
- 252 (8) To make out and deliver to any applicant, upon payment to the clerk of legal fees, a
 253 correct transcript, properly certified, of any minute, record, or file of the clerk's office
 254 except for such records or documents which are, by provision of law, not to be released;
- 255 (9) Upon payment of legal fees to the clerk, to make out a transcript of the record of each
 256 case to be considered by the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals and a duplicate
 257 thereof numbered in exact accordance with the numbering of the pages of the original
 258 transcript of the record to be transmitted to the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals;
- 259 (10) To make a notation on all conveyances ~~or~~ of real or personal property, including
 260 liens, of the day date and time they were left to be recorded, which shall be evidence of
 261 the facts stated. ~~Beginning July 1, 1998, all~~ All liens or conveyances ~~left to be filed shall~~
 262 presented to the clerk for filing shall be on 8 1/2 inch by 11 inch or 8 1/2 inch by 14 inch
 263 paper or the digital equivalent and shall have a three-inch margin at the top to allow space
 264 for the clerk's notation required by this paragraph. ~~If any lien or conveyance shall be~~
 265 ~~presented for filing without sufficient margin, the clerk shall attach a piece of paper~~
 266 ~~sufficient to give such margin at the top of the filing.~~ The clerk shall not
 267 record any instrument or document conveying real or personal property, including liens,
 268 that is not prepared as required by this paragraph. The notation required by this
 269 paragraph may be made by the clerk or the clerk's deputy or employee by written
 270 signature, facsimile signature, ~~or~~ mechanical printing, or electronic signature or stamp;
- 271 (11) To attest deeds and other written instruments for registration;
- 272 (12) To administer all oaths required by the court or that may otherwise be required by
 273 law and to record all oaths required by law;
- 274 (13) To transmit to the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority or its
 275 designated agent within 24 hours of filing of any financing statement, amendment to a

276 financing statement, assignment of a financing statement, continuation statement,
 277 termination statement, or release of collateral, by facsimile or other electronic means,
 278 such information and in such form and manner as may be required by the Georgia
 279 Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, for the purpose of including such
 280 information in the central indexing system administered by such authority; provided,
 281 however, that weekends and holidays shall not be included in the calculation of the 24
 282 hour period;

283 (14) To remit to the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority a portion of
 284 all fees collected with respect to the filings of financing statements, amendments to
 285 financing statements, assignments of financing statements, continuation statements,
 286 termination statements, releases of collateral, or any other documents related to personal
 287 property and included in the central index, in accordance with the rules and regulations
 288 of such authority regarding the amount and payment of such fees; provided, however, that
 289 such fees shall be remitted to the authority not later than the tenth day of the month
 290 following the collection of such fees, and the clerk shall not be required to remit such fees
 291 more often than once a week;

292 (15) To participate in the state-wide uniform automated information system for real and
 293 personal property records, as provided for by Code Sections 15-6-97 and 15-6-98, and
 294 any network established by the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority
 295 relating to the transmission and retrieval of electronic information concerning real estate
 296 and personal property data for any such information systems established by such
 297 authority so as to provide for public access to real estate and personal property
 298 information, including liens filed pursuant to Code Section 44-2-2 and maps and plats.
 299 Each clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall provide to the authority or its designated agent in
 300 accordance with the rules and regulations of the authority such real estate information
 301 concerning or evidencing title to real property and such personal property information or
 302 access to such information which is of record in the office of clerk of ~~the~~ superior court
 303 and which is necessary to establish and maintain the information system, including
 304 information filed pursuant to Code Section 44-2-2 and maps and plats. Each clerk of ~~the~~
 305 superior court shall provide and transmit real estate and personal property information
 306 filed in the office of ~~the~~ clerk of superior court, including information required by Code
 307 Section 44-2-2 and maps and plats, to the authority for testing and operation of the
 308 information system at such times and in such form as prescribed by the authority;

309 ~~(15.1)~~(16) To participate in any network established by the Georgia Superior Court
 310 Clerks' Cooperative Authority relating to the transmission and retrieval of electronic
 311 information concerning carbon sequestration results and related transactions for any such
 312 information systems established by such authority for purposes of the carbon

313 sequestration registry established pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 6 of Title 12, so as to
 314 provide for public access to carbon sequestration registry information. Each clerk of ~~the~~
 315 superior court shall provide to the authority or its designated agent in accordance with the
 316 rules and regulations of the authority such information evidencing carbon sequestration
 317 results and related transactions and access to such information which is of record in the
 318 office of clerk of ~~the~~ superior court and which is necessary for purposes of the carbon
 319 sequestration registry. Each clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall provide and transmit carbon
 320 sequestration results and related transaction information filed in the office of ~~the~~ clerk of
 321 superior court to the authority for testing and operation of the electronic information
 322 system for the carbon sequestration registry at such times and in such form as prescribed
 323 by the authority. Each clerk shall charge and collect such fees as may be established by
 324 the Georgia Superior Courts Clerks' Cooperative Authority, which shall be paid into the
 325 county treasury less and except any sums as are otherwise directed to be paid to the
 326 authority, all in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the authority pursuant
 327 to Code Section 15-6-97.2;

328 ~~(16)~~(17) To file and transmit all civil case filing and disposition forms required to be
 329 filed pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 9-11-3 and subsection (b) of Code
 330 Section 9-11-58;

331 ~~(17)~~(18)(A) To transmit to the Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority within 30
 332 days of filing the civil case filing and disposition forms prescribed in Code Section
 333 9-11-133.

334 (B) To electronically collect and transmit to the Georgia Superior Court Clerks'
 335 Cooperative Authority all data elements required in subsection (g) of Code Section
 336 35-3-36 in a form and format required by the Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative
 337 Authority and The Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia. ~~The electronic~~
 338 ~~collection and transmission of data shall begin no later than January 1, 2002.~~ The data
 339 transmitted to the authority pursuant to this Code section shall be transmitted to the
 340 Georgia Crime Information Center in satisfaction of the clerk's duties under subsection
 341 (g) of Code Section 35-3-36 and to the Georgia Courts Automation Commission ~~who~~
 342 which shall provide the data to the Administrative Office of the Courts for use of the
 343 state judicial branch. Public access to said data shall remain the responsibility of the
 344 Georgia Crime Information Center. No release of collected data shall be made by or
 345 through the authority;

346 ~~(18)~~(19) To participate in agreements, contracts, and networks necessary or convenient
 347 for the performance of ~~the~~ duties ~~provided in paragraphs (16) and (17) of this subsection~~
 348 required by law;

349 ~~(19)~~(20) To perform such other duties as are or may be required by law or as necessarily
 350 appertain to the office of clerk of the superior court; and

351 ~~(20)~~(21) To keep an automated, computer based jury management system that facilitates
 352 the maintenance of the county master jury list pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 12
 353 of this title unless this duty is delegated to a jury clerk as provided in subsection (a) of
 354 Code Section 15-12-11 or subsection (b) of Code Section 15-12-23.

355 (b) Nothing in this Code section shall restrict or otherwise prohibit a clerk from electing
 356 to store for computer retrieval any or all records, dockets, indices, or files; nor shall a clerk
 357 be prohibited from combining or consolidating any books, dockets, files, or indices in
 358 connection with the filing for record of papers of the kind specified in this Code section or
 359 any other law, provided that any automated or computerized record-keeping method or
 360 system shall provide for the systematic and safe preservation and retrieval of all books,
 361 dockets, records, or indices. When the clerk of superior court elects to store for computer
 362 retrieval any or all records, the same data elements used in a manual system shall be used,
 363 and the same integrity and security maintained. Regardless of the automated or
 364 computerized system elected, each clerk shall maintain and make readily available to the
 365 public ~~complete, printed copies of the~~ real estate grantor and grantee indices, which shall
 366 be updated regularly; and prepared in compliance with paragraph (15) of subsection (a) of
 367 this Code section and Code Section 15-6-66. A clerk of superior court shall be deemed to
 368 satisfy the provisions of subsection (c) of Code Section 50-18-70 when on-site, electronic
 369 access to computerized indices of county records is provided to the public during regular
 370 business hours and in compliance with this Code section."

371 **SECTION 1-11.**

372 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-62, relating to additional duties,
 373 as follows:

374 "15-6-62.

375 (a) The clerk of the superior court is required to record all the proceedings relating to any
 376 civil action or criminal case within six months after the final determination of the case.
 377 Such recording may be in well-bound books, on microfilm, or in digital format. If a clerk
 378 elects to record proceedings on microfilm or in digital format, he or she shall make
 379 available to the public a machine for reading and reproducing such microfilmed or digitally
 380 formatted records. If a clerk elects to record proceedings in digital format, the provisions
 381 of Code Section 15-6-62.1 shall apply.

382 (b) Every clerk of the superior or city courts ~~must record immediately in his book of final~~
 383 records court shall record, microfilm, or digitally image for the purpose of permanently
 384 preserving:

- 385 (1) Every part of the pleadings in every case;
 386 (2) All garnishments, affidavits, bonds, and answers thereto;
 387 (3) All attachment affidavits, bonds, and writs of attachment; and
 388 (4) All claim affidavits and bonds and all bonds given in any judicial proceeding.

389 ~~The~~ No clerk shall not allow any ~~of such papers~~ record to be taken from his or her office
 390 before recording them as required in this Code section. ~~Such record shall constitute a part~~
 391 ~~or all of the final record of the papers required by law to be made, as the case may be.~~

392 ~~(e) If any subsequent paper in the case is recorded, the clerk shall make a reference at the~~
 393 ~~foot of the record required in this Code section, to the page where such subsequent record~~
 394 ~~may be found and shall also state the case in the index to the book of record and shall enter~~
 395 ~~the number of the pages on which the same is to be found.~~

396 ~~(d)~~(c) Where any paper ~~so recorded~~ becomes lost or destroyed, a certified copy thereof
 397 from the clerk of ~~the~~ superior court may be substituted. No fee shall be charged or
 398 collected for any such copy if the loss of the same is caused by or results from any
 399 negligence or fault of the clerk.

400 ~~(e) Any clerk who fails to discharge the duties set forth in this Code section is subject to~~
 401 ~~be fined by the presiding judge, on his own motion, for a contempt whenever the judge~~
 402 ~~discovers that the clerk has failed to discharge his duties. It shall be the duty of the judges~~
 403 ~~of the several superior courts to give this law specially in charge to the grand juries and to~~
 404 ~~require them to inform the court whether or not the clerk has performed the duties specified~~
 405 ~~as aforesaid. However, clerks shall not be punished for contempt under this Code section~~
 406 ~~until after the paper or papers required to be recorded have been filed for three months.~~

407 ~~(f)~~(d) This Code section shall not apply to cases dismissed and settled before the record
 408 is made."

409 **SECTION 1-12.**

410 Said title is further amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) of Code Section 15-6-66,
 411 relating to grantor-grantee index, as follows:

412 "(a) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall provide at the expense of each county a suitable
 413 duplex index book, or a series of books, or a card index, or a microfilm record, ~~or an~~
 414 electronic data base, or an electronic, computer-based document management system, or
 415 any combination of one or more of such systems, in which shall be indexed the name of the
 416 grantor and grantee of every instrument recorded pursuant to subparagraph (a)(4)(C) of
 417 Code Section 15-6-61, ~~such index to.~~ Such index shall include the character of the
 418 instrument, the book or location of the record, and the date of filing ~~and to include the time~~
 419 ~~of filing if not otherwise reflected in the record.~~

420 (b) The name of the grantor as listed in the index shall be the name of the owner of the title
 421 which such instrument purports to convey or affect, whether the instrument was executed
 422 by the owner or by some other person, firm, or corporation on behalf of such owner, and
 423 whether or not such owner is deceased."

424 **SECTION 1-13.**

425 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-67, relating to recordation of
 426 maps and plats, and specifications, as follows:

427 "15-6-67.

428 (a) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall file and record in his or her office maps or plats
 429 relating to real estate in the county.

430 (b) Maps or plats to be filed and recorded in the office of ~~the~~ clerk of ~~the~~ superior court
 431 shall be prepared in accordance with the ~~following~~ minimum standards and specifications
 432 adopted in the rules and regulations of the State Board of Registration for Professional
 433 Engineers and Land Surveyors:

434 (1) **Material.**

435 (A) Any such maps or plats shall be a good legible copy, ~~such as a blue, white, or other~~
 436 commercial print reproduced from an original.

437 (B) ~~The minimum line widths and letter or character heights delineated on such maps~~
 438 ~~or plats shall be as follows:~~

439 (i) ~~Maps or plats drawn on 8 1/2 inch by 11 inch or 8 1/2 inch by 14 inch tracings~~
 440 ~~shall have a minimum line width of 0.010 inches and a minimum letter or character~~
 441 ~~height of 0.080 inches;~~

442 (ii) ~~Maps or plats drawn on 11 inch by 17 inch tracings shall have a minimum line~~
 443 ~~width of 0.010 inches and minimum letter or character height of 0.080 inches;~~ or

444 (iii) ~~Maps or plats drawn on 17 inch by 22 inch or 24 inch by 36 inch tracings shall~~
 445 ~~have a minimum line width of 0.013 inches and a minimum letter or character height~~
 446 ~~of 0.080 inches.~~

447 (C) ~~In counties using microfilming procedures, when a map or plat is filed for record~~
 448 ~~the original drawing, which shall not be larger than 24 inches by 36 inches, shall be~~
 449 ~~submitted to the clerk for microfilming and a legible copy, which shall not be larger~~
 450 ~~than 17 inches by 22 inches, shall be filed for record; provided, however, that a full-size~~
 451 ~~positive copy of the original may be tendered and used for microfilming. The clerk~~
 452 shall enter manually or electronically the filing date, plat book number, and page
 453 number on the original drawing plats and shall cause the same information to be entered
 454 electronically on the digital copy presented for filing and shall return the an original
 455 drawing physical copy of the plat with the filing information on it to the land surveyor

456 or the person filing the same for record. The clerk shall permanently retain the original
 457 physical and digital copy of the plat. Both the filing information and plat shall serve
 458 as evidence of the original drawing. The physical copy, the digital copy, or both may
 459 be displayed to the public in compliance with Code Section 15-6-68;

460 (2) **Caption.** ~~The maps~~ Maps or plats shall have a title or name which shall be contained
 461 in the caption, and the caption shall also provide the following information:

462 (A) The county, city, town, or village, land district and land lot, and subdivision, if the
 463 property lies within a particular subdivision;

464 (B) The date of plat preparation and the date of the field survey;

465 (C) The scale, stated and shown graphically;

466 (D) The name, address, telephone number, and registration number of the land
 467 surveyor or the statement that he or she is the county surveyor and is not required by
 468 law to be a registered surveyor; and

469 (E) All reproductions of original maps or plats shall bear the original signature, in
 470 black a contrasting color of ink, of the registrant placed across the registration seal in
 471 order to be a valid or recordable map or plat. The provisions of this subparagraph shall
 472 apply to all maps or plats that are sealed by a land surveyor which depict and describe
 473 real property boundaries. Maps and plats which do not meet the requirements of this
 474 subparagraph shall not be sealed nor recorded;

475 (3) **Size.** Maps or plats shall not be less than 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches and not larger
 476 than ~~can be recorded without folding;~~ 24 inches by 36 inches, provided that the clerk shall
 477 be authorized to file maps or plats in compliance with this subparagraph. When an
 478 original map or plat is submitted to the clerk for filing and recordation, the clerk shall be
 479 authorized to accept the plat for recordation only upon receiving a minimum of two
 480 properly signed reproductions of the original physical plat and a digital copy that has
 481 been created at full scale, properly signed and in an electronic format acceptable by the
 482 Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority. The digital copy shall be
 483 submitted via media approved by the clerk.

484 (4) **Data.** ~~Maps or plats shall be made in a professional manner and in accordance with~~
 485 ~~the standards of good drafting procedures and shall show the following information, as~~
 486 ~~specified:~~

487 (A) ~~All maps or plats shall show the direction and distance from a point of reference~~
 488 ~~to a point on the boundary of the individual survey, and such additional data as may be~~
 489 ~~required to relocate the boundary point from the point of reference with the same~~
 490 ~~degree of accuracy required of the parcel surveyed. The point of reference shall be an~~
 491 ~~established, monumented position which can be identified or relocated from maps,~~
 492 ~~plats, or other documents on public record;~~

493 ~~(B) All maps or plats of boundary surveys or subdivision surveys shall show bearings~~
494 ~~of all lines of the boundary or lot lines, and distances of all boundary or lot lines, and~~
495 ~~area of the parcels expressed in acres or square feet;~~

496 ~~(C) All maps or plats of boundary surveys shall show the closure precision of the field~~
497 ~~survey as the ratio of one foot to the traversed distance in which an error of one foot~~
498 ~~would occur and a statement as to the method of adjustment. The closure may be stated~~
499 ~~as follows:~~

500 ~~'The field data upon which this map or plat is based has a closure precision of one foot~~
501 ~~in _____ feet, and an angular error of _____ per angle point, and was adjusted~~
502 ~~using _____ rule';~~

503 ~~(D) All maps or plats of boundary surveys shall show the closure precision of the data~~
504 ~~shown on the map or plat. The closure may be stated as follows:~~

505 ~~'This map or plat has been calculated for closure and is found to be accurate within~~
506 ~~one foot in _____ feet';~~

507 ~~(E) All maps or plats shall show the width and the former widths, if pertinent, of all~~
508 ~~rights of way adjacent to or crossing the property or adjacent to any point of reference;~~

509 ~~(F) All maps or plats shall show easements and apparent encroachments, if pertinent;~~

510 ~~(G) In the case of curved lines, the curve shall be defined by curve data to include the~~
511 ~~radius, arc length, chord bearing, and distance for regular curves. Chord distances and~~
512 ~~directions shall be given for irregular curves;~~

513 ~~(H) All land lot lines, land district lines, land section lines, and city, county, and state~~
514 ~~boundaries intersecting or adjacent to the surveyed property shall be indicated by lines~~
515 ~~drawn upon the map or plat with appropriate words and figures;~~

516 ~~(I) All corner markers and markers of pertinent reference points shall be fully~~
517 ~~described and indicated as to their material or types and shall be constructed of a~~
518 ~~permanent material such as iron, steel, concrete, or stone;~~

519 ~~(J) An arrow shall be shown on the map or plat to indicate the principal meridian, and~~
520 ~~a notation shall be made as to the reference of bearings to magnetic north, astronomic~~
521 ~~north, or grid north. A grid north reference shall indicate the zone;~~

522 ~~(K) All linear distances shown on maps or plats shall be horizontal;~~

523 ~~(L) All angular directions shown on maps or plats shall be represented in degrees and~~
524 ~~minutes. Where plats state or surveys require accuracy in excess of 1 in 5,000, the~~
525 ~~angular directions shall be represented in degrees, minutes, and seconds. All angular~~
526 ~~directions shall be referenced to the principal meridian;~~

527 ~~(M) A statement shall be shown on the map or plat to indicate the type of equipment~~
528 ~~used to obtain the linear and angular measurements used in the preparation of the map~~
529 ~~or plat; and~~

530 ~~(N) All maps or plats shall show the state plane coordinates of at least two permanent~~
 531 ~~monuments thereon, when a National Geodetic Survey monument is within 500 feet of~~
 532 ~~any point on the property mapped or platted, or any point of reference shown thereon.~~

533 (c) If the plat meets the requirements of subsections (b) and (d) of this Code section, it
 534 shall be the duty of the clerk of ~~the~~ superior court to file and record such ~~map or plat or~~
 535 ~~blueprint, tracing, photostatic copy, or other copy of a map or~~ and digital image of such
 536 plat.

537 (d) Whenever the municipal planning commission, the county planning commission, the
 538 municipal-county planning commission, or, if no such planning commission exists, the
 539 appropriate municipal or county governing authority prepares and adopts subdivision
 540 regulations, and upon receiving approval thereon by the appropriate governing authority,
 541 then no plat of subdivision of land within the municipality or the county shall be filed or
 542 recorded in the office of ~~the~~ clerk of ~~the~~ superior court of a county without the approval
 543 thereon of the municipal or county planning commission or governing authority and
 544 without such approval having been entered in writing on the plat by the secretary or other
 545 designated person of the municipal or county planning commission or governing authority.
 546 The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall not file or record a plat of subdivision which does not
 547 have the approval of the municipal or county planning commission or governing authority
 548 as required by this subsection. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection to
 549 the contrary, no approval of the municipal or county planning commission or governing
 550 authority shall be required if no new streets or roads are created or no new utility
 551 improvements are required or no new sanitary sewer or approval of a septic tank is
 552 required. Any plat of survey containing thereon a certification from ~~the~~ a licensed surveyor
 553 that the provisions relative to this subsection do not require approval of the municipal or
 554 county planning commission or governing authority shall entitle said plat to record. Any
 555 licensed surveyor who fraudulently certifies that a plat of survey does not require the
 556 approval specified in this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

557 **SECTION 1-14.**

558 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-68, relating to display of maps
 559 and plats, index, land lot record, and notation of date and time on face of plat, as follows:

560 "15-6-68.

561 (a) The clerk of each superior court shall provide ~~appropriate binders, not less than 18~~
 562 ~~inches by 24 inches in size, in which the maps or plats or prints thereof referred to in Code~~
 563 ~~Section 15-6-67 shall be placed without the necessity of folding in any manner. One of the~~
 564 ~~binders and the prints therein contained shall be open to the general public for inspection,~~
 565 ~~as are all other public records in the clerk's office. Alternatively, in those counties using~~

566 ~~microfilm procedures, the clerk thereof shall take such steps as are necessary to provide~~
 567 ~~access to the same information~~ books, binders, or any other alternative system, either
 568 manual or electronic, for providing public access to maps and plats. For all electronic
 569 images of plats submitted to the clerk on or after July 1, 2012, the clerk shall provide
 570 necessary equipment for printing either an entire full-size copy of each recorded plat or
 571 copies of sections of each entire recorded plat, printed in full scale.

572 (b) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall also provide an ~~appropriate index book, or a series~~
 573 ~~of index books, or a card index, or a microfilm record, or an electronic data base, or any~~
 574 ~~combination of one or more of such systems, in which shall be indexed all such~~ electronic,
 575 computer-based indexing system in which shall be indexed all maps or plats under the
 576 caption or name of the subdivision, if any, under the name of the owner or owners of the
 577 property mapped or platted, and also under the land lot number and district number if the
 578 land lies in that portion of the state which has been surveyed into land lots and districts.

579 (c) In counties of this state that are divided into land lots, the clerk of superior court shall
 580 ~~maintain a record for each individual~~ provide an electronic, computer-based system for
 581 maintaining and searching a record for each land lot and land district by listing all surveys
 582 made for each lot and where they are recorded.

583 (d) The clerk shall note the date and time of the filing of a plat for record on the face of the
 584 plat."

585 **SECTION 1-15.**

586 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-73, relating to destruction of
 587 obsolete records, as follows:

588 "15-6-73.

589 (a) Clerks of ~~the~~ superior court ~~are~~ shall be authorized, from time to time, to destroy books
 590 containing records of instruments conveying personal property only, including bills of sale,
 591 mortgages, conditional sales contracts, retention title contracts, and bills of sale to secure
 592 debt, ~~which records are over 15~~ whenever the records are older than five years of age.

593 (b) Every clerk of ~~the~~ superior court ~~or city court is~~ shall be, from time to time, authorized
 594 to destroy original civil pleadings which have been recorded in the minutes or writ books
 595 of the court in every civil case which has been finally terminated for 20 years or more,
 596 except cases involving divorce, titles to land, legitimation of a child or children, and
 597 proceedings for adoption."

598 **SECTION 1-16.**

599 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-74, relating to preservation of
 600 newspapers containing advertisements, as follows:

601 "15-6-74.

602 (a) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court is required to procure and preserve for public inspection
603 a complete file of all newspaper issues in which his legal advertisements ~~actually appear~~
604 are published.

605 (b) The issues of the newspapers so preserved shall be bound, microfilmed, ~~photostated,~~
606 ~~or photographed,~~ or digitally imaged in a format approved by the clerk and such
607 newspapers, microfilm, photographs, or ~~photostatic~~ copies thereof shall be maintained
608 ~~within the county courthouse and made available to the public~~ for a period of not less than
609 50 years, after which time the newspapers, microfilm, photographs, or ~~other photostatic~~
610 ~~copies may be destroyed, at the discretion of the clerk of the superior court~~ or copies
611 thereof shall be preserved for historical purposes in electronic or micrographic format.

612 (c) The clerk of ~~the~~ superior court is authorized to enter into an agreement with either the
613 judge of the probate court or the sheriff of the county, or both, relative to the binding,
614 retention, microfilming, photographing, or ~~photostating~~ digital imaging of the newspapers
615 and their preservation and retention, in which event it shall be necessary that only one set
616 of newspapers or copies thereof shall be retained in the county courthouse. Such set of
617 newspapers or copies thereof shall include copies of the newspaper issues in which the
618 clerk's advertisements appear and the newspaper issues in which the advertisements which
619 the judge of the probate court or the sheriff, or both, are required to preserve and retain
620 appear. The agreement shall specify the person who shall maintain and preserve the
621 newspapers, microfilm, photographs, or ~~photostatic~~ digital copies.

622 (d) Upon the request of a clerk of superior court, any journal or newspaper declared, made,
623 or maintained as the official organ of any county for the publication of sheriff's sales,
624 citations of probate court judges, or any other advertising commonly known in terms of
625 'official or legal advertising' shall provide to the clerk of superior court copies of such
626 journal or newspaper containing legal advertisements, in digital format, as required by the
627 clerk, when the clerk shall be required to comply with provisions of subsection (a) or (b)
628 of this Code section. The copies shall be provided to the clerk, the judge of the probate
629 court, and the sheriff by January 31 of the year following the year in which the newspaper
630 served as the official legal organ of the county. The ability of a journal or newspaper to
631 provide copies digitally or electronically may be a qualification by the clerk of superior
632 court, the probate judge, and the sheriff in designating a journal or newspaper as the official
633 legal organ of the county."

634 **SECTION 1-17.**

635 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-79, relating to payment of unpaid
636 costs in felony cases, as follows:

637 "15-6-79.
 638 ~~In all of the counties of this state in which superior court clerks are paid on a fee basis, all~~
 639 ~~unpaid costs arising from services rendered in felony cases, including transcripts to~~
 640 ~~appellate courts under indigency affidavits, which are due clerks of the superior courts shall~~
 641 ~~be paid from county funds after each term of court by order of the judge approving same,~~
 642 ~~whether the defendant is convicted or acquitted Reserved."~~

643 **SECTION 1-18.**

644 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-80, relating to payment of
 645 transcript costs to clerk before transmittal, as follows:

646 "15-6-80.

647 In all cases certified to the appellate courts, the costs for preparing the transcript of the
 648 record shall be paid by the appellant to the clerk before the same is transmitted unless the
 649 judge presiding over the case being appealed approves an affidavit submitted to the judge
 650 by the appellant makes affidavit that he certifying that the appellant is unable to pay such
 651 costs or give security therefor upon the appellant providing adequate security for such
 652 costs."

653 **SECTION 1-19.**

654 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-82, relating to removal of
 655 superior court clerks, charges, and trial, as follows:

656 "15-6-82.

657 ~~A clerk of the superior court is subject to be removed from office by the judge of the court~~
 658 ~~for any sufficient cause, including incapacity or misbehavior in office. The charges must~~
 659 ~~be exhibited to the court in writing, and the facts tried by a jury. The clerk shall be entitled~~
 660 ~~to a copy of the charges three days before trial.~~

661 (a) Whenever the Governor determines that an investigation of a clerk of superior court
 662 of this state should be made as a result of criminal charges, alleged misconduct in office,
 663 or alleged incapacity of the clerk of superior court to perform the functions of his or her
 664 office, the Governor shall appoint an investigative committee consisting of two clerks of
 665 superior court who are members of The Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia and
 666 the Attorney General to conduct an investigation. Such clerks of superior court may be
 667 from any two counties in the state other than the county of the clerk of superior court under
 668 investigation. The members of any such committee shall receive no compensation for their
 669 services but shall be reimbursed for any expenses incurred in connection with an
 670 investigation. The funds necessary to conduct an investigation shall come from the funds
 671 appropriated to the executive branch of the state government.

672 (b) Any member of the committee shall be authorized to administer oaths to any witness
 673 before the committee. The committee shall make a report of its investigation to the
 674 Governor within 30 days from the date of the appointment of both clerk members by the
 675 Governor.

676 (c) If the committee recommends the suspension of the clerk of superior court, the
 677 Governor shall be authorized to suspend the clerk of superior court for a period of up to 60
 678 days. In any case where a clerk of superior court has been suspended for 60 days, the
 679 Governor may extend the period of suspension for an additional 30 days. Upon such
 680 recommendation, the Governor shall also be authorized to request the district attorney of
 681 the county of the clerk's residence to bring a removal petition against the clerk in superior
 682 court based upon the evidence reported by the committee. After the filing of such petition,
 683 a clerk of superior court is subject to being removed from office by the judge of the court
 684 for any sufficient cause, including incapacity or misbehavior in office. The charges must
 685 be exhibited to the court in writing, and the facts tried by a jury. The clerk shall be entitled
 686 to a copy of the charges three days before trial. In the event that the Governor determines
 687 that further investigation should be made, the Governor may then order additional
 688 investigation by the committee, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, other law enforcement
 689 agencies of this state, or any special committee appointed by the Governor for such
 690 purpose. During any period of suspension, the clerk shall continue to hold office; however,
 691 the chief deputy clerk shall perform the duties of the clerk of superior court or, in the
 692 absence of a chief deputy clerk, an interim clerk shall be appointed as provided in
 693 paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Code Section 15-6-53 to perform the duties of the clerk
 694 during the period of suspension.

695 (d) If the clerk of superior court is indicted for a felony, the provisions of Code Section
 696 45-5-6 shall apply."

697 **SECTION 1-20.**

698 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-86, relating to location of clerk's
 699 office in place other than courthouse, storage of records in different location, and county
 700 documents exception, as follows:

701 "15-6-86.

702 (a) In the event that the space at the courthouse is inadequate for the clerk's office and the
 703 things belonging thereto, the clerk, in writing, may request the governing authority of the
 704 county to move his or her office to some other designated place in the county. In his or her
 705 request, the clerk shall state the inadequacy which exists. The governing authority ~~is~~ shall
 706 be authorized to comply with the request ~~and may~~ but may only designate another place
 707 as the office of the clerk with the approval of the clerk. Such place must be owned by the

708 county or a body politic and shall not be more than 500 feet from the courthouse at their
 709 nearest points. ~~The judge~~ Notwithstanding local law, the judges of the superior court of
 710 the judicial circuit in which the county is located or the chief judge in those circuits having
 711 ~~more than one judge~~ by a majority vote must give written consent before the clerk shall be
 712 authorized to move his or her office to such place; provided, however, that failing a
 713 majority agreement the chief judge of the judicial circuit shall make such determination.

714 (b) In the event that space at the courthouse or other place where the office of the clerk is
 715 located is inadequate to ensure the safe storage of archival or inactive records, the clerk,
 716 after obtaining written permission approval from the governing authority of the county ~~and~~
 717 ~~from the superior court judge of the circuit in which the county is located or the chief judge~~
 718 ~~in those circuits having more than one judge~~, may cause the records to be stored at a data
 719 storage and retrieval facility within the State of Georgia. The clerk shall give public notice
 720 of the place of storage by posting notice at the courthouse. If documents are stored ~~outside~~
 721 ~~the county where the documents were created~~ in any place other than the location where
 722 the documents were created, filed, or recorded, the government entity shall:

723 (1) Bear all costs of transporting such documents back to the county of origin for
 724 purposes of responding to requests under Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to
 725 inspections of public records; and

726 (2) Provide by contract for:

727 (A) Specific retrieval times in which documents requested shall be delivered; and

728 (B) Payment of additional fees by the person requesting the document from the clerk
 729 for expedited service.

730 ~~(c)(1) Subject to the requirements of paragraph (2) of this subsection, in~~ In a county where
 731 the county site is located in an unincorporated area of the county and the county governing
 732 authority has constructed one or more permanent satellite courthouses within the county
 733 and has further designated each such structure as a courthouse annex or has otherwise
 734 established each such structure as an additional courthouse to the courthouse located at the
 735 county site, the clerk of superior court shall be authorized to maintain his or her offices and
 736 all things belonging thereto including the permanent records at one of the additional
 737 courthouse locations or at the courthouse at the county site. The clerk of superior court
 738 may, but ~~is~~ shall not be required to, maintain a satellite office at an additional courthouse
 739 which is not the location of the clerk of superior court's main office where the permanent
 740 records are kept. No one may for any purpose remove records of the clerk of superior court
 741 from the courthouse or the clerk's satellite office without the written consent of the clerk;
 742 provided, however, that a judge or the judge's designee may check out a record or file for
 743 a case assigned to such judge upon providing a written receipt for such record or file to the
 744 clerk.

745 ~~(2) The judge of the superior court of the circuit in which the county is located, or the~~
 746 ~~chief judge if the county is a part of a circuit having more than one judge, must give~~
 747 ~~written consent for the relocation or additional office, or both, and the county governing~~
 748 ~~authority shall provide the necessary office space at the alternate or additional location,~~
 749 ~~or both.~~

750 (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code section, county documents, as
 751 defined in subsection (c) of Code Section 36-9-5, shall be stored only in accordance with
 752 the provisions of Code Section 36-9-5."

753 **SECTION 1-21.**

754 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-87, relating to use of photostatic
 755 and photographic equipment, as follows:

756 "15-6-87.

757 ~~(a) The clerk of the superior court of any county of this state may install and use~~
 758 ~~photostatic or other photographic equipment, including microfilm photographic equipment,~~
 759 ~~and electronic or computer equipment for use in the filing, docketing, recording, copying,~~
 760 ~~binding, indexing, certification, and furnishing of copies, including certified copies, of any~~
 761 ~~and all instruments, records, and proceedings or parts of the same of record or on file in the~~
 762 ~~clerk's office, with the consent and permission only of the county governing authority. The~~
 763 ~~equipment and supplies for the same may be provided by the proper and respective county~~
 764 ~~authorities out of county funds. The county governing authority shall supply all fixtures,~~
 765 ~~supplies, and equipment necessary for the proper functioning of the office of clerk of~~
 766 ~~superior court.~~

767 (b) All provisions of law relating to the filing, docketing, recording, keeping, copying,
 768 binding, indexing, certification, and furnishing of copies of records, including certified
 769 copies, and those provisions relating to the amount of fees of officers in connection
 770 therewith, as far as may be consistent with this Code section, shall apply to such ~~photostatic~~
 771 ~~and digital, photographic, and electronic records and copies.~~

772 ~~(c) The provisions of this Code section for the installation and use of the equipment~~
 773 ~~enumerated in subsection (a) of this Code section shall be construed as permissive only and~~
 774 ~~are cumulative of other laws. However, should such equipment be purchased as authorized~~
 775 ~~in this Code section, the use of the equipment shall be mandatory insofar as practical.~~

776 ~~(d) This Code section shall not be construed to change or repeal any rule of court or~~
 777 ~~provision of law relating to records on appeal or review in the courts of this state."~~

778 **SECTION 1-22.**

779 Said title is further amended by repealing Code Section 15-6-87.1, relating to participation
780 in state-wide county computerized information network and authorized fees, as follows:

781 "~~15-6-87.1.~~

782 ~~Provided that the General Assembly appropriates the necessary funds for the establishment~~
783 ~~and operation of a state-wide county computerized information network, each clerk of a~~
784 ~~superior court shall participate in the network so as to provide local public access to any~~
785 ~~information which is filed with the Secretary of State pursuant to Title 14 and which is~~
786 ~~available through such a computerized information network. The network may be~~
787 ~~developed to provide each clerk of a superior court with additional public information.~~
788 ~~Each clerk of a superior court shall be authorized, but not required, to charge and collect~~
789 ~~a fee of not more than \$2.00 for the first page and 50¢ per page for each additional page~~
790 ~~to recover the cost of providing a printed copy of any information which is available~~
791 ~~through the computerized information network."~~

792 **SECTION 1-23.**

793 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-88.1, relating to adjustment of
794 schedule for certain counties containing federal land, as follows:

795 "~~15-6-88.1.~~

796 ~~In any county in which more than 70 percent of the population of the county according to~~
797 ~~the United States decennial census of 1980 or any future such census resides on property~~
798 ~~of the United States government which is exempt from taxation by this state, the population~~
799 ~~of the county for purposes of Code Section 15-6-88 shall be deemed to be the total~~
800 ~~population of the county minus the population of the county which resides on property of~~
801 ~~the United States government. Reserved."~~

802 **SECTION 1-24.**

803 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-89, relating to additional
804 remuneration for certain services, as follows:

805 "~~15-6-89.~~

806 In addition to the minimum salary provided in Code Section 15-6-88 or any other salary
807 provided by any applicable general or local law, each clerk of ~~the~~ superior court of any
808 county who also serves as clerk of a state court, city court classified as a municipal court
809 but funded through appropriations of the county governing authority, juvenile court, ~~or~~
810 civil court under any applicable general or local law of this state or who performs duties
811 pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 15-12-1.1 shall receive for his
812 or her services in such other court a salary of not less than \$323.59 per month, to be paid

813 from the funds of the county. In the event any such court for which a clerk of ~~the~~ superior
 814 court is serving as clerk is abolished, the clerk of ~~the~~ superior court shall not be entitled to
 815 any salary heretofore received for service in such court."

816 **SECTION 1-25.**

817 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-92, relating to continuation of
 818 fee system, as follows:

819 "15-6-92.

820 ~~Code Sections 15-6-88 through 15-6-91 and this Code section shall not be construed so as~~
 821 ~~to place any clerk of the superior court who is on the fee system of compensation on April~~
 822 ~~1, 1973, on a salary system of compensation. Any clerk who is compensated under the fee~~
 823 ~~system of compensation on April 1, 1973, shall continue to receive compensation under the~~
 824 ~~fee system of compensation until local legislation is enacted by the General Assembly~~
 825 ~~placing such clerk on an annual salary equal to or greater than the minimum annual salary~~
 826 ~~provided for in Code Sections 15-6-88 through 15-6-91 and this Code section. Reserved."~~

827 **SECTION 1-26.**

828 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-93, relating to office hours, as
 829 follows:

830 "15-6-93.

831 (a) Except as provided in this Code section, the office of each clerk of ~~the~~ superior court
 832 shall be open to conduct business Monday through Friday from at least 9:00 A.M. until
 833 5:00 P.M. and shall not close for any period of time during such hours.

834 (b) Any office of a clerk of a superior court which is open for operation on Saturday may
 835 close on one day Monday through Friday for a period of time equal to that period of time
 836 during which the office is open on Saturday. Nothing in this Code section shall be
 837 construed as requiring any office of a clerk of a superior court to be open on any public ~~and~~
 838 holiday, legal holiday or, day of rest which, or other similar time that is recognized and
 839 designated as such by Georgia law or by the governing authority of the county.

840 (c) This Code section shall only apply to the office of a clerk of a superior court if there
 841 is employed in that office at least one employee other than the clerk.

842 (d) In any county of this state having a population of fewer than 10,000 persons according
 843 to the United States decennial census of 1980 or any future such census, the clerk of
 844 superior court may close such office for a designated lunch period if all other county
 845 offices in the county courthouse simultaneously close for a lunch period. The period of
 846 closing of the clerk's office shall coincide with the period for closing the other county
 847 offices.

848 (e) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require the office of ~~the~~ clerk of ~~the~~
 849 superior court to be open if all other county offices are closed because of inclement weather
 850 or any other reason.

851 (f) When it is necessary for the clerk of superior court to conduct necessary training of
 852 employees, the clerk may close his or her office for up to eight hours during any six-month
 853 period, provided that he or she gives at least ten days' notice to the public, or sooner with
 854 the approval of the chief judge of the superior court, prior to such closing, and provided,
 855 further, that there are no proceedings scheduled in superior court during the time of the
 856 closing. Proceedings shall include all civil or criminal hearings or trials, whether or not a
 857 jury is required.

858 (g) When the clerk's office is closed for training purposes, the period of closure shall be
 859 deemed a legal holiday for such office and, therefore, all deadlines provided for by law for
 860 filing in the clerk's office any pleading, process, summons answer, or other document shall
 861 be extended to the next regular business day of the clerk's office. 'Business day' means a
 862 day on which the clerk's office is open for business and shall not include any Saturday,
 863 Sunday, or legal holiday officially observed by the office as provided in this Code section."

864 **SECTION 1-27.**

865 Said title is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

866 "15-6-100.

867 No agreement by a clerk to acquire services, supplies, or equipment authorized by this
 868 article that requires expenditure of county funds may be entered into unless the funds to be
 869 obligated are included in the budget of the county for the operation of the clerk's office at
 870 the time of the execution of such agreement."

871 **SECTION 1-28.**

872 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-10-87, relating to magistrate court
 873 filing fees to be transferred upon transfer of case to state or superior court, as follows:

874 "15-10-87.

875 (a) When any case is transferred from the magistrate court to the state court or superior
 876 court, the magistrate court shall transmit to the state court clerk or superior court clerk the
 877 filing fee paid to the magistrate court. The state court clerk or superior court clerk shall file
 878 the case without further deposit against costs or filing fee, but as between the parties the
 879 costs shall be as in other cases in the state court or superior court. This subsection shall
 880 only apply to actions filed on or before June 30, 2012.

881 (b) When any case is transferred from the magistrate court to the state court or superior
 882 court, the magistrate court shall transmit to the state court clerk or superior court clerk the

883 filing fee paid to the magistrate court. The state court clerk or superior court clerk shall file
 884 the case without further deposit against costs or filing fee; provided, however, that all costs
 885 and filing fees shall be paid by the parties within 30 days. Failure to pay such costs and
 886 filing fees shall result in a dismissal of the transferred case unless there is good cause
 887 shown. The magistrate court clerk shall transmit to the clerk of the state court or superior
 888 court a certified copy of the contents of the entire file for the case being transferred. This
 889 subsection shall only apply to actions filed on or after July 1, 2012."

890 **SECTION 1-29.**

891 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 15-13-33, relating
 892 to the table of fees to be kept, as follows:

893 "(a) Every public official ~~must~~ shall constantly keep and have posted in a conspicuous
 894 place in his or her office ~~or~~, the place where ~~he usually executes~~ the business thereof is
 895 conducted, or in an electronic format accessible to the public a table of his fees for his or
 896 her office stated in fair words and figures. ~~On failure to do so, he shall forfeit \$1.00 per~~
 897 ~~day for every day he so neglects, to be recovered at the action of any informer. The~~
 898 ~~informer shall be entitled to keep the entire recovery."~~

899 **SECTION 1-30.**

900 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-13-36, relating to restrictions on
 901 superior or state court clerks charging fees for certified copies of records, as follows:

902 "15-13-36.

903 No clerk of any superior court or state court shall charge any fee for providing any certified
 904 copy of any record or portion thereof requested by a ~~solicitor, solicitor-general, district~~
 905 ~~attorney, or assistant district prosecuting attorney in this state~~ for use in any criminal case."

906 **SECTION 1-31.**

907 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-16-11, relating to disposition of
 908 books, as follows:

909 "15-16-11.

910 ~~All books which the sheriff is required to keep, after becoming full, must be deposited in~~
 911 ~~the office of the clerk of the superior court to be kept as are other books of record;~~
 912 ~~provided, however, that records which the sheriff is required to keep and which are~~
 913 ~~computerized shall be maintained and stored for computer retrieval in the office of sheriff~~
 914 Reserved."

915 **SECTION 1-32.**

916 Code Section 36-9-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to erection, repair,
917 and furnishing of county buildings and storage of documents, is amended by revising
918 paragraph (2) of subsection (c) as follows:

919 "(2) A county officer, the county board of tax assessors, or any other officer of the county
920 having the responsibility or custody of any county documents set forth in paragraph (1)
921 of this subsection shall, at night or when the county office is closed, keep such county
922 documents:

923 (A) In a fireproof safe or vault;

924 (B) In fireproof cabinets;

925 (C) On microfilm, pursuant to the standards set forth in Article 6 of Chapter 18 of Title
926 50, only if a security copy has been sent to the Georgia State Archives; ~~or~~

927 (D) At a location not more than 100 miles from the county in a data storage and
928 retrieval facility approved by the county governing authority within the State of
929 Georgia which is in a building or facility which is in compliance with the fire safety
930 standards applicable to archives and record centers as established by the National Fire
931 Protection Association in Standard No. 232, as such standard was adopted on August
932 11, 1995. If documents are stored outside the county where the documents were
933 created, the government entity shall bear all costs of transporting such documents back
934 to the county of origin for purposes of responding to requests under Article 4 of Chapter
935 18 of Title 50, relating to inspections of public records. Such documents shall be made
936 available to the requester; or

937 (E) On any other electronic imaging medium that facilitates retrieval of such
938 documents via electronic means, provided that such medium enables conversion of such
939 documents to future electronic imaging technologies and provided that such custodian
940 creates a daily computer-based backup of all archival documents stored on such
941 medium."

942 **SECTION 1-33.**

943 Title 44 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to property, is amended by
944 revising subsection (a) of Code Section 44-2-14, relating to requirements for recordation, as
945 follows:

946 "(a) Except for documents electronically filed as provided for in Chapter 12 of Title 10,
947 and in other Code sections in this part, before ~~Before~~ any deed to realty or personalty or
948 any mortgage, bond for title, or other recordable instrument executed in this state may be
949 recorded, it ~~must~~ shall be an original instrument and shall be attested or acknowledged as
950 provided by law. However, nothing in this Code section shall dispense with another

951 witness where an additional witness is required. This Code section shall not apply to
 952 transactions covered by Article 9 of Title 11."

953 **SECTION 1-34.**

954 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 44-2-26, relating to recording of a plat
 955 or a copy of a plat, as follows:

956 "44-2-26.

957 The owner of real property or of any interest therein or any holder of a lien thereon may
 958 have a plat of the property or a blueprint, tracing, ~~photostatic~~ digital copy, or other copy
 959 of a plat of the property recorded and indexed in the office of the clerk of the superior court
 960 of the county in which the property or any part thereof is located. It shall be the duty of the
 961 clerk to record and index any plat or any blueprint, tracing, ~~photostatic~~ digital copy, or
 962 other copy of the plat that conforms with Code Section 15-6-67."

963 **SECTION 1-35.**

964 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 44-5-30, relating to requisites of deeds
 965 to lands, as follows:

966 "44-5-30.

967 Except for documents electronically filed as provided for in Chapter 12 of Title 10 and Part
 968 1 of Article 1 of Chapter 2 of this title, a ~~A~~ deed to lands ~~must~~ shall be an original
 969 document, in writing, signed by the maker, and attested by at least two witnesses. It ~~must~~
 970 shall be delivered to the purchaser or his or her representative and be made on a good or
 971 valuable consideration. The consideration of a deed may always be inquired into when the
 972 principles of justice require it."

973 **SECTION 1-36.**

974 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 44-14-4, relating to the procedure for
 975 cancellation of mortgage, as follows:

976 "44-14-4.

977 Any mortgagor who has paid off his or her mortgage may present the paid mortgage to the
 978 clerk of the superior court of the county or counties in which the mortgage instrument is
 979 recorded, together with the order of the mortgagee or transferee directing that the mortgage
 980 be canceled. After payment of the fee authorized by law, the clerk shall index and record,
 981 in the same manner as the original mortgage instrument is recorded, the canceled and
 982 satisfied mortgage instrument or such portion thereof as bears the order of the mortgagee
 983 or transferee directing that the mortgage be canceled, together with any order of the
 984 mortgagee or transferee directing that the mortgage be canceled. The clerk shall show on

985 the index of the cancellation and on the cancellation document the deed book and page
 986 number where the original mortgage instrument is recorded. The clerk shall manually or
 987 through electronic means record across the face of the mortgage instrument the words
 988 'satisfied' and 'canceled' and the date of the entry and shall sign his or her name thereto
 989 officially. The clerk shall also manually or electronically make a notation on the record of
 990 the mortgage to indicate where the order of the cancellation is recorded."

991 **SECTION 1-37.**

992 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 44-14-364, relating to the release of
 993 a lien upon filing of bond, as follows:

994 "44-14-364.

995 (a) When any person entitled under this part to claim a lien against any real estate located
 996 in this state files his or her lien in the office of the clerk of the superior court of the county
 997 in which the real estate is located, the owner of the real estate or the contractor employed
 998 to improve the property may, before or after foreclosure proceedings are instituted,
 999 discharge the lien ~~by filing a bond in the office of that clerk~~ upon the approval of a bond
 1000 by the clerk of superior court. The bond shall be conditioned to pay to the holder of the
 1001 lien the sum that may be found to be due the holder upon the trial of any lien action that
 1002 may be filed by the lienholder to recover the amount of his or her claim within 365 days
 1003 from the time the claim of lien is filed. The bond shall be in double the amount claimed
 1004 under that lien and shall be either a bond with good security approved by the ~~clerk of the~~
 1005 ~~court~~ clerk of superior court or a cash bond, except in cases involving a lien against
 1006 ~~residential property~~ the owner's domicile, in which event the bond shall be in the amount
 1007 claimed under the lien. An owner or contractor may be required to provide supporting data
 1008 to the clerk to prove the value of domiciled property when such property serves as a bond
 1009 to discharge a lien provided for in this Code section. Upon the ~~filing~~ approval by the clerk
 1010 of the bond provided for in this Code section, the real estate shall be discharged from the
 1011 lien. For purposes of this subsection, the term 'domicile' means the established, fixed,
 1012 permanent, or ordinary dwelling place of the owner.

1013 (b) Within seven days of filing ~~such~~ the bond required by subsection (a) of this Code
 1014 section and any attachments, the party filing ~~the~~ such bond shall send a notice of filing such
 1015 bond and a copy of the bond by registered or certified mail or statutory overnight delivery
 1016 to the lien claimant at the address stated on the lien or, if no such address is shown for the
 1017 lien claimant, to the person shown as having filed such lien on behalf of the claimant at the
 1018 indicated address of such person or, if the bond is filed by a contractor, to the owner of the
 1019 property, provided that whenever the lien claimant or the owner is an entity on file with the
 1020 Secretary of State's Corporations Division, sending the notice of filing such bond and a

1021 copy of the bond to the company's address or the registered agent's address on file with the
 1022 Secretary of State shall be deemed sufficient; provided, however, that the failure to send
 1023 the notice of filing the bond and copy of the bond shall not invalidate the bond for purposes
 1024 of discharge of a claim of lien under this Code section. With respect to property bonds, the
 1025 clerk shall not accept any real property bond unless the real property is scheduled in an
 1026 affidavit attached thereto setting forth a description of the property and indicating the
 1027 record owner thereof, including any liens and encumbrances and amounts thereof, the
 1028 market value, and the value of the sureties' interest therein, which affidavit shall be
 1029 executed by the owner or owners of the interest; the bond and affidavit shall be recorded
 1030 in the same manner and at the same cost as other deeds of real property. So long as the
 1031 bond exists, it shall constitute a lien against the property described in the attached affidavit.
 1032 ~~(b)~~(c) The clerk of the superior court shall have the right to rely upon the amount specified
 1033 in the claim of lien in determining the sufficiency of any bond to discharge under this Code
 1034 section. The failure to specify both the amount claimed due under the lien and the date said
 1035 claim was due shall result in such lien not constituting notice for any purposes.
 1036 (d) The clerk of the superior court shall be held harmless for good faith regarding any
 1037 discretionary act in connection with approval of any bond provided for in this Code
 1038 section."

1039 **SECTION 1-38.**

1040 Chapter 18 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state printing
 1041 and documents, is amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 50-18-70, relating to
 1042 inspection of public records, as follows:

1043 "(c) Any Except as provided in subsection (b) of Code Section 15-6-61, any computerized
 1044 index of a county real estate deed records shall be printed or made available through
 1045 electronic means for purposes of public inspection no less than every 30 days and any
 1046 correction made on such index shall be made a part of the printout or made available
 1047 through electronic means and shall reflect the time and date that said index was corrected."

1048 **SECTION 1-39.**

1049 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (a) of Code Section 50-18-98, relating
 1050 to title to records and access to records of constitutional officers, as follows:

1051 "(a) Title to any record transferred to the Georgia State Archives as authorized by this
 1052 article shall be vested in the division. The division shall not destroy any record transferred
 1053 to it by an agency without consulting with the proper official of the transferring agency
 1054 prior to submitting a retention schedule requesting such destruction to the State Records
 1055 Committee. Access to records of constitutional officers shall be at the discretion of the

1056 constitutional officer who created, received, or maintained the records, but no limitation
 1057 on access to such records shall extend more than 25 years after creation of the records. As
 1058 used in this Code section, the term 'constitutional officer' means the Governor, Lieutenant
 1059 Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State School Superintendent,
 1060 Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Agriculture, or Commissioner of Labor."

1061 **SECTION 1-40.**

1062 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 50-18-120, relating to the authority
 1063 for establishment of microform standards, as follows:

1064 "50-18-120.

1065 The authority for the establishment of microform standards shall be vested in the State
 1066 Records Committee. All powers and duties of the State Records Committee as provided
 1067 in Article 5 of this chapter shall be applicable to the establishment and maintenance of
 1068 microform standards in this state. With respect to microform standards for the courts, the
 1069 concurrence of ~~the Administrative Office of the Courts~~ The Council of Superior Court
 1070 Clerks of Georgia and the Judicial Council of Georgia shall be required for the
 1071 establishment of such standards."

1072 **PART II**

1073 **SECTION 2-1.**

1074 Code Section 1-3-1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to construction of
 1075 statutes generally, is amended by revising division (d)(2)(A)(ii), as follows:

1076 "(ii) Code Sections 15-6-88 through ~~15-6-92~~ 15-6-91;"

1077 **SECTION 2-2.**

1078 Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to courts, is amended by revising
 1079 subsection (c) of Code Section 15-1-10, relating to removal and storage of court records, as
 1080 follows:

1081 "(c) With the prior written consent of the governing authority of the county or municipality
 1082 and the prior written consent of the chief judge, judge of the probate court, or chief
 1083 magistrate of the affected court, the clerk of each superior court, state court, probate court,
 1084 magistrate court, juvenile court, or municipal court in this state is authorized, but not
 1085 required, to create and maintain digital copies of records, pleadings, orders, writs, process,
 1086 and other documents submitted to or issued by the court in criminal, quasi-criminal,
 1087 juvenile, or civil proceedings or in any proceedings involving the enforcement of
 1088 ordinances of local governments. All digital copies created pursuant to this subsection

1089 shall be accurate copies of the original documents and shall be stored and indexed in such
 1090 manner as to be readily retrievable in the office of the clerk during normal business hours.
 1091 It shall be the duty of the clerk to provide and maintain software and computers, readers,
 1092 printers, and other necessary equipment in sufficient numbers to permit the retrieval,
 1093 duplication, and printing of such digitally stored documents in a timely fashion when
 1094 copies are requested. A copy of such digitally stored document retrieved by the clerk shall
 1095 be admissible in all courts in the same manner as the original document. If a backup copy
 1096 is created pursuant to the process prescribed by subsections (b); and (c); ~~and (d)~~ of Code
 1097 Section 15-6-62, the clerk is authorized to destroy the original document. This subsection
 1098 shall not apply to documents or records which have been ordered sealed by the court nor
 1099 to documents which are placed in evidence in a proceeding. The costs of creating and
 1100 storing digital copies of documents and providing the necessary software and equipment
 1101 to retrieve and reproduce such documents shall be paid from funds available for the
 1102 operation of the court. The provisions of this subsection shall constitute an additional and
 1103 alternative method of records management and shall not supersede or repeal Code Section
 1104 15-6-62, 15-6-62.1, 15-6-86, or 15-6-87."

1105 **SECTION 2-3.**

1106 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-57, relating to election to break
 1107 a tie, as follows:

1108 "15-6-57.

1109 Should any two or more candidates at an election to fill a vacancy in the office of superior
 1110 court clerk, or at a regular election, have the highest and an equal number of votes, the
 1111 judge of the probate court shall set a date and advertise another election in the manner
 1112 prescribed in Code Section ~~15-6-56~~ 15-6-53 and shall do so until a choice is made."

1113 **SECTION 2-4.**

1114 Said title is further amended by revising subsections (b), (c), and (d) of Code Section
 1115 15-6-90, relating to longevity increases, as follows:

1116 "(b) The minimum salaries provided for in Code Sections 15-6-88 and 15-6-89, this Code
 1117 section, and Code ~~Sections~~ Section 15-6-91 ~~and 15-6-92~~ shall be considered as salary only.

1118 Expenses for deputy clerks, equipment, supplies, copying equipment, and other necessary
 1119 and reasonable expenses for the operation of a clerk's office shall come from funds other
 1120 than the funds specified as salary in such Code sections.

1121 (c) This Code section shall not be construed to affect any local legislation, except where
 1122 such local legislation provides for a salary lower than the salary provided in Code Sections

1123 15-6-88 and 15-6-89, this Code section, and Code ~~Sections~~ Section 15-6-91 ~~and 15-6-92~~,
 1124 in which event such Code sections shall prevail.

1125 (d) Code Sections 15-6-88 and 15-6-89, this Code section, and Code ~~Sections~~ Section
 1126 15-6-91 ~~and 15-6-92~~ shall not be construed to reduce the salary of any clerk of ~~the~~ superior
 1127 court presently in office."

1128 **SECTION 2-5.**

1129 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 15-6-91, relating to the effect of salary
 1130 provisions on local legislation, as follows:

1131 "15-6-91.

1132 All local legislation in effect on April 1, 1973, or enacted subsequent to April 1, 1973, and
 1133 affecting compensation for clerks of ~~the~~ superior courts of the various counties shall be of
 1134 full force and effect except where such local legislation provides for a salary lower than the
 1135 salary provided in Code Sections 15-6-88 through 15-6-90; and this Code section, ~~and~~
 1136 ~~Code Section 15-6-92~~, in which event such Code sections shall prevail."

1137 **SECTION 2-6.**

1138 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 15-16-8, relating to
 1139 filling the vacancy in the office of sheriff, as follows:

1140 "(b) If the probate judge fails to appoint a qualified person to discharge the duties of the
 1141 sheriff until the vacancy is filled ~~In case there is a failure to appoint, as set forth in Code~~
 1142 ~~Section 15-6-54~~, the coroner of the county shall act as sheriff. If there is no coroner, the
 1143 sheriff of any adjoining county is authorized to act as sheriff until the probate judge of the
 1144 ~~probate court~~ makes the appointment or an election is held."

1145 **SECTION 2-7.**

1146 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 15-16-10, relating
 1147 to duties of the sheriff and electronic storage, as follows:

1148 "(b) If any sheriff or deputy fails to comply with any provision of subsection (a) of this
 1149 Code section, he or she shall be fined for a contempt as the clerk of ~~the~~ superior court is
 1150 fined in similar cases. Code Section ~~15-6-82, as to removal,~~ 15-16-26 shall also apply to
 1151 sheriffs."

1152 **SECTION 2-8.**

1153 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 15-16-26, relating
 1154 to investigation of charges against the sheriff, as follows:

1155 "(c) If the committee recommends the suspension of the sheriff, the Governor shall be
 1156 authorized to suspend the sheriff for a period of up to 60 days. In any case where a sheriff
 1157 has been suspended for 60 days, the Governor may extend the period of suspension for an
 1158 additional 30 days. Upon such recommendation, the Governor shall also be authorized to
 1159 request the district attorney of the county of the sheriff's residence to bring a removal
 1160 petition against the sheriff pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 15-16-10 and Code
 1161 Section ~~15-6-82~~ 15-16-26 based upon the evidence reported by the committee. In the event
 1162 that the Governor determines that further investigation should be made, he or she may then
 1163 order additional investigation by the committee, by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation,
 1164 by other law enforcement agencies of this state, or by any special committee appointed by
 1165 the Governor for such purpose."

1166 SECTION 2-9.

1167 Title 42 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to penal institutions, is amended
 1168 by revising paragraph (5) of subsection (c) of Code Section 42-1-12, relating to the State
 1169 Sexual Offender Registry, as follows:

1170 "(5) Keep all records of sexual offenders in a secure facility in accordance with Code
 1171 Sections 15-1-10, 15-6-62, and 15-6-62.1 until official proof of death of a registered
 1172 sexual offender; thereafter, the records shall be destroyed ~~in accordance with Code~~
 1173 ~~Sections 15-1-10, 15-6-62, and 15-6-62.1.~~"

1174 SECTION 2-10.

1175 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 42-4-4, relating to
 1176 duties of sheriff as to inmates and failure to comply, as follows:

1177 "(c) Any sheriff or deputy who fails to comply with this Code section shall be fined for
 1178 contempt, as is the clerk of the superior court in similar cases. The sheriff or deputy shall
 1179 also be subject to removal from office as prescribed in Code Section ~~15-6-82~~ 15-16-26."

1180 PART III

1181 SECTION 3-1.

1182 Chapter 12 of Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to juries, is
 1183 amended by enacting a new Code Section 15-12-40 to read as follows:

1184 "15-12-40.
 1185 Any person who has been convicted of a felony in a state or federal court who has not had
 1186 his or her civil rights restored and any person who has been judicially determined to be
 1187 mentally incompetent shall not be eligible to serve as a trial juror."

1188 **SECTION 3-2.**

1189 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (e) of Code Section 15-12-40.1,
1190 relating to the state-wide master jury list, driver's license information, list of registered
1191 voters, and random list of persons to comprise venire, as follows:

1192 "(e) On and after July 1, 2012, in each county, upon court order, the clerk shall choose a
1193 random list of persons from the county master jury list to comprise the venire; provided,
1194 however, that jurors summoned prior to July 1, 2012, shall remain eligible to comprise the
1195 venire."

1196 **SECTION 3-3.**

1197 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 15-12-60, relating to the
1198 qualifications of grand jurors, as follows:

1199 "15-12-60.

1200 (a) ~~Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, all citizens~~ Any citizen of
1201 this state 18 years of age or older who ~~are not incompetent because of mental illness or~~
1202 ~~mental retardation and who have~~ has resided in the county for at least six months preceding
1203 the time of service shall be ~~qualified~~ eligible and liable to serve as ~~a grand jurors unless~~
1204 ~~otherwise exempted by law~~ juror.

1205 (b) ~~The following persons shall not be eligible to serve as grand jurors:~~

1206 (1) ~~Any person who holds any elective office in state or local government or who has~~
1207 ~~held any such office within a period of two years preceding the time of service as a grand~~
1208 ~~juror; and~~

1209 (2) ~~Any person who has been convicted of a felony and who has not been pardoned or~~
1210 ~~had his or her civil rights restored~~ shall not be eligible to serve as a grand juror.

1211 (c) Any person who has been convicted of a felony in a state or federal court who has not
1212 had his or her civil rights restored and any person who has been judicially determined to
1213 be mentally incompetent shall not be eligible to serve as a grand juror."

1214 **PART IV**

1215 **SECTION 4-1.**

1216 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.