

EXHIBIT 1

House Bill 916 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Leverett of the 33rd and Wilensky of the 79th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Title 5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to appeal and error, so
2 as to provide for a unified procedure for appealing decisions of a lower judicatory to a
3 superior or state court; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings and
4 intent; to provide for definitions; to provide for superior and state court appellate jurisdiction
5 and related exceptions; to provide for the preemption of certain laws; to provide for a
6 uniform appellate procedure to superior and state courts; to clarify the standard of review;
7 to provide for appeals to a jury; to provide for the permissibility of equitable practices and
8 procedures not prescribed; to provide for standardized general procedures for appeals to
9 superior and state court; to provide for petitions for review, responses, replies, and
10 amendments thereto; to provide for the management of court proceedings and other related
11 matters; to provide for service of process; to provide for deadline extensions; to provide for
12 limited grounds for dismissal; to provide for transfer when venue or jurisdiction is improper;
13 to provide for the record on appeal; to provide for transmission of the record; to provide for
14 notice of a petitioner confined to jail; to provide for remand; to provide for the payment of
15 costs and related exceptions; to provide for bonds and related security; to provide for
16 procedures after review; to provide for dismissal or withdrawal and the effects thereof; to
17 provide for damages for frivolous appeals and defenses in civil cases; to provide for the
18 recovery of costs; to repeal and reserve Chapter 4 of said title, relating to certiorari to

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superior court; to amend various titles of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, so as to provide for conforming changes; to correct cross-references and remove obsolete or improper references; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

PART I.

SECTION 1-1.

Title 5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to appeal and error, is amended by repealing in its entirety Chapter 3, relating to appeals to superior or state court, and enacting a new Chapter 3 to read as follows:

"CHAPTER 3

5-3-1.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the 'Superior and State Court Appellate Practice Act.'

5-3-2.

(a) The General Assembly finds that many appeals from a lower judicatory to a superior or state court result in dismissal on complex procedural grounds and not a decision on the merits.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly in enacting this chapter to:

(1) Provide a single, modern, and uniform procedure called a 'petition for review' for appealing a decision made by a lower judicatory to a superior or state court, as authorized by the laws and the Constitution of this state;

(2) Increase access to justice through the greater resolution of appeals on the basis of substantive issues rather than on complex procedural grounds; and

(3) Retain the limited appellate jurisdiction of state courts prescribed in the Constitution of Georgia and Code sections outside of this chapter.

(c) Consistent with the laws and the Constitutions of Georgia and the United States, the courts shall:

(1) Construe the provisions of this chapter broadly so as to render decisions based on the merits of each case and avoid dismissal of any case or refusal to consider any points raised therein unless such dismissal or refusal is expressly required by statute;

(2) Construe any petition for review filed under this chapter according to its substance, merit, and function and not merely its style, form, or title; and

(3) Not construe this chapter to expand the limited appellate jurisdiction of state courts prescribed in the Constitution of Georgia and Code sections outside of this chapter.

5-3-3.

As used in this chapter, the term:

(1) 'Article 6 probate court' means a probate court with expanded jurisdiction as provided in Article 6 of Chapter 9 of Title 15.

(2) 'Clerk' means a clerk of court or an individual who acts as the functional equivalent of a clerk of court if a lower judicatory does not have an official clerk of court.

(3) 'Decision' means any formal or informal adjudication, decision, determination, judgment, order, ruling, or other act of a judicatory that is judicial or quasi-judicial in nature.

(4) 'Final judgment' means a decision of a lower judicatory in a case that is no longer pending in a lower judicatory in which a petitioner has:

(A) Exhausted all appeals or administrative remedies available in the lower judicatory; and

(B) Satisfied all conditions precedent to appeal provided by law, including, but not limited to, the conditions provided for in Code Section 33-2-26.

(5) 'Judicatory' means any court, official, board, tribunal, commission, municipal or county authority, council, or similar body exercising judicial or quasi-judicial powers authorized by law. The term 'judicatory' shall include an arbitrator, administrative law judge, mediator, or similar adjudicator authorized by law to act on behalf or at the request of any public official or body.

(6) 'Lower judicatory' means any judicatory:

(A) Inferior in authority to the superior and state courts; and

(B) Subject to the appellate jurisdiction of the superior or state courts as provided by the laws and the Constitution of this state.

(7) 'Perfect' or 'perfected' means to take all legal steps needed to complete service of process.

(8) 'Person' means an individual, corporation, association, partnership, other organization, or other entity.

(9) 'Petition for review' means any request for review of a final judgment filed in a reviewing court by a petitioner, including, but not limited to, any request for review formerly titled as a petition for writ of certiorari, petition for writ of mandamus, petition for writ of prohibition, or notice of appeal.

(10) 'Reporting' shall have the same meaning as the term 'court reporting' as defined in paragraph (4) of Code Section 15-14-22.

(11) 'Respondent' means a person who is adverse to the petitioner and a party to the dispute underlying the final judgment rendered by the lower judicatory. Except for

reasons other than having rendered the final judgment under review, the term 'respondent' shall not include any judge, official, or member of the lower judicatory that rendered the final judgment under review. If there is no party adverse to the petitioner, the respondent shall be:

(A) For quasi-judicial decisions rendered by a state official, board, tribunal, commission, authority, council, or similar body, the respondent shall be the State of Georgia;

(B) For quasi-judicial decisions rendered by a municipal official, board, tribunal, commission, authority, council, or similar body, the respondent shall be the corresponding municipality; and

(C) For quasi-judicial decisions rendered by a county or local school system official, board, tribunal, commission, authority, council, or similar body, the respondent shall be the corresponding county or local school system.

(12) 'Reviewing court' means a superior or state court reviewing a final judgment pursuant to this chapter.

5-3-4.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, the superior and state courts shall have appellate jurisdiction pursuant to this chapter over a final judgment of a lower judicatory.

(b) The superior courts shall not have appellate jurisdiction pursuant to this chapter over any state court. The state courts shall not have appellate jurisdiction pursuant to this chapter over any superior court. In addition, neither a superior court nor a state court shall have appellate jurisdiction pursuant to this chapter over the following courts or matters:

(1) Juvenile courts;

(2) The Municipal Court of Columbus;

(3) The Civil Court of Macon-Bibb County;

116 (4) The Civil Court of Richmond County;

117 (5) The Georgia State-wide Business Court;

118 (6) A civil case in an Article 6 probate court;

119 (7) An order appointing a temporary administrator; and

120 (8) Any other court from which an appeal directly to the Court of Appeals or the
121 Supreme Court is authorized.

122 (c) Except as provided in subsection (g) of Code Section 5-3-17, this chapter shall preempt
123 any local law or any locally enacted law, ordinance, regulation, rule, or procedure in
124 conflict with this chapter governing an appeal of a final judgment to a reviewing court.

125 5-3-5.

126 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section or otherwise provided by law,
127 a reviewing court shall:

128 (1) Review only matters raised in the record of the proceeding in the lower judiciary;

129 (2) Accept the findings of fact and credibility of the lower judiciary unless they are
130 clearly erroneous;

131 (3) Accept a decision regarding an issue within the sound discretion of the lower
132 judiciary unless such a decision was an abuse of discretion;

133 (4) Determine whether the final judgment was sustained by sufficient evidence; and

134 (5) Review questions of law de novo.

135 (b) A reviewing court shall conduct a de novo proceeding under this chapter if a de novo
136 proceeding is specified by law. Cases reviewed under this subsection shall be heard by the
137 reviewing court without a jury unless a jury trial is ordered by the reviewing court and
138 authorized by law.

139 (c) A demand for a jury trial under this chapter shall be filed in the reviewing court
140 within 30 days after filing a petition for review.

5-3-6.

(a) A petitioner invokes the appellate jurisdiction of a reviewing court under this chapter by filing a petition for review with the clerk of the reviewing court.

(b) The consent of the lower judicatory shall not be required for the filing of a petition for review.

5-3-7.

(a) Except as otherwise prescribed by law, superior and state court appellate practices and procedures not prescribed in this chapter shall be governed by the applicable superior or state court rules and orders of the reviewing court not in conflict with this chapter.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2) of subsection (g) of Code Section 48-5-311, a petitioner shall file a petition for review with the clerk of the reviewing court within 30 days after the final judgment of the lower judicatory is:

(1) Signed and notice of the final judgment has been provided to all parties, if the lower judicatory does not have a clerk; or

(2) Filed or recorded, whichever first occurs, if the lower judicatory has a clerk.

(c) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this Code section, all parties to the proceedings in the lower judicatory are parties in the reviewing court.

(d) Except for reasons other than having rendered the final judgment under review, any judge, official, or member of a lower judicatory that rendered the final judgment under review shall not be a party, defendant, or respondent in a petition for review. To correct such error, the reviewing court shall:

(1) Require a petitioner to amend the petition for review; or

(2) Upon the reviewing court's own motion, order the erroneously named judge, official, or member of a lower judicatory dismissed.

(e) Except as otherwise required by law, a petition for review shall contain in substantially similar form the following:

(1) A caption stating the name of the petitioner and the name of the respondent, if any;

(2) The title 'PETITION FOR REVIEW TO SUPERIOR COURT' or 'PETITION FOR REVIEW TO STATE COURT' below the caption;

(3) A body that includes the following:

(A) The statement: '(name of petitioner), the petitioner named above, petitions the (Superior or State) Court of (name of county) for review of the final judgment rendered by (name of lower judicatory) on (date) with the following case number designated by the lower judicatory: (lower judicatory case number).';

(B) A concise statement of the final judgment being appealed;

(C) A brief statement describing any existing recording, transcript, or other record of evidence in the lower judicatory; and

(D) If the case before the lower judicatory is a criminal case, then a brief statement of the offense and sentence prescribed by the lower judicatory, if any, including whether the petitioner is confined in jail or otherwise incarcerated pending the appeal; and

(4) The name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address, if any, of:

(A) The attorney for the petitioner; or

(B) The petitioner, if the petitioner is not represented by an attorney.

(f) Failure to provide the information required by subsection (e) of this Code section shall be an amendable defect, and such defect shall be cured as directed by the reviewing court.

(g) The petitioner shall serve a copy of the petition for review on all parties within five days after filing the petition for review in the reviewing court.

(h) The petitioner shall serve the lower judicatory with a copy of the filed petition for review within five days after filing the petition for review in the reviewing court. The copy of the petition for review served on the lower judicatory shall contain the case number assigned by the reviewing court. If the lower judicatory has a clerk, the copy of the petition for review shall be deemed served on the lower judicatory by service of a copy of the petition for review on the clerk.

5-3-8.

(a) The respondent shall file a response to a petition for review with the reviewing court within 30 days after being served with a copy of the petition for review. If a de novo proceeding is required as specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 5-3-5, the response shall include any counterclaim, cross appeal, defense, or third-party claim asserted by the respondent.

(b) A cross appeal or counterclaim shall not require a response, unless one is required by order of the court, and shall automatically stand denied.

(c) A reply, if any, shall be filed by the petitioner within 30 days after being served with a copy of the respondent's response. If a de novo proceeding is required as provided in subsection (b) of Code Section 5-3-5, the petitioner's reply shall include any counterclaim, cross appeal, defense, or third-party claim asserted by the petitioner.

(d) A party may amend a petition for review, response, or reply under this chapter as a matter of course and without leave of the reviewing court at any time before the entry of a pretrial order or before a hearing on the merits is held by the reviewing court, whichever shall first occur. Thereafter, a party may amend a petition for review, response, or reply only by leave of the reviewing court or by written consent of each adverse party. Such leave shall be freely given by the reviewing court if justice so requires.

(e) A party shall serve a copy of any pleading filed with the reviewing court on all parties to the proceeding.

5-3-9.

(a) The reviewing court may issue such orders and writs as may be necessary to aid in its jurisdiction and manage court proceedings under this chapter.

(b) The reviewing court shall grant continuances and enter such other orders as may be necessary to permit a just and expeditious review of a petition for review.

(c) After a petition for review is filed in the reviewing court, the reviewing court shall:

(1) Establish filing deadlines for any necessary documents; and

(2) Schedule any necessary proceedings or hearings.

(d) If there is more than one party plaintiff or party defendant in the case before the lower judicatory, any one or more of such parties may file a petition for review pursuant to this chapter regardless of whether other parties join in or consent to such petition for review; provided, however, that upon appeal, all parties in the case before the lower judicatory shall be bound by the final decision of the reviewing court; and provided, further, that, if damages are awarded upon such appeal, the damages shall only be recovered against the party appealing and the appealing party's security, if any, and not against a party failing or refusing to appeal.

(e) The monetary limitation provided for in paragraph (5) of subsection (a) of Code Section 15-10-2 shall not apply to any decision rendered by the reviewing court under this chapter.

5-3-10.

(a) Except as otherwise provided by law, service of process under this chapter shall be made in the following manner:

(1) A party's attorney or agent authorized to receive service shall be served with any document, unless:

(A) Direct service on a party is ordered by the reviewing court; or

(B) A specific manner of service is otherwise required by law;

(2) Service of any document shall be made in person, by mail, or electronically if consent to electronic service is given as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section;

(3) Proof of service shall be shown by:

(A) Acknowledgment of the attorney or party served; or

(B) A certificate of service from the attorney, party, or other person perfecting service;

(4) The certificate of service provided for in this subsection shall:

(A) Be attached to the original of the document to be served;

(B) Be taken as prima-facie proof of service; and

(C) Read substantially as follows: 'I do certify that (number of copies) of the attached document(s) have been furnished to (name of party served) by (delivery, mail, or email) on (date delivered, mailed, or emailed)';

(5) Service of any document may be perfected either before or after filing such service with the clerk. If service is made by mail, it shall be deemed perfected on the day it was deposited in the mail. If service is perfected by mail, three days shall be added to any deadline required for a response, to allow for mailing;

(6) If the address of any party is unknown and the party is not represented by an attorney of record, service may be perfected on the party by mail directed to the last known address of the party; and

(7) Service may be waived or acknowledged either before or after filing.

(b) A person may consent to being served with pleadings electronically in a petition for review as provided for in subsection (f) of Code Section 9-11-5.

5-3-11.

(a) Any party requesting a filing deadline extension from the reviewing court shall do so before the expiration of the existing filing period in effect, whether prescribed or extended.

(b) The reviewing court shall only grant one filing deadline extension not to exceed 30 days for the filing of a petition for review under subsection (b) of Code Section 5-3-7. The reviewing court may grant such filing deadline extensions for other documents as may be necessary to permit a just and expeditious review of a petition for review.

(c) The clerk of the reviewing court shall promptly serve all parties and the clerk of the lower judicatory with a copy of:

(1) Any extension granted under this Code section; and

(2) The corresponding motion filed to request such extension.

5-3-12.

(a) Except for a final decision on the merits, a reviewing court shall not dismiss a petition for review unless the reviewing court finds one or more of the following:

(1) The petition for review was not filed within the time prescribed or extended;

(2) The reviewing court lacks jurisdiction;

(3) The question presented by the petitioner is moot;

(4) The absence of a justiciable controversy;

(5) The failure of a petitioner to prosecute; or

(6) The failure of a petitioner to comply with the provisions of this chapter or any court rule or order.

(b) The reviewing court shall not immediately dismiss a petition for review because of any defect in the petition for review, bond, or affidavit of indigence, or because of the failure of the lower judicatory to transmit any document.

(c) The reviewing court shall give the petitioner a reasonable opportunity to amend a petition for review, bond, or affidavit of indigence for the purpose of curing any defect. The reviewing court may impose such filing deadlines for amendments under this subsection as may be necessary to permit a just and expeditious review of a petition for review.

(d) The reviewing court shall not immediately dismiss a petition for review for failure to perfect service on any party if the party obligated to perfect service shows due diligence in attempting to timely perfect service.

5-3-13.

(a) A petitioner shall file a petition for review in the superior or state court where venue and jurisdiction are proper as prescribed by the laws and the Constitution of this state.

(b) Upon a finding by a lower judicatory, a reviewing court, the Court of Appeals, or the Supreme Court that venue is improper or jurisdiction is lacking for any petition for review,

298 the clerk of the applicable court shall promptly transfer a petition for review to a court
299 where venue and jurisdiction are proper in accordance with the rules and procedures
300 applicable to the transferring court.

301 5-3-14.

302 (a) In civil cases and misdemeanor criminal cases, a lower judicatory may require the
303 audio or video recording, reporting, or transcribing of the evidence and proceedings in the
304 lower judicatory on terms prescribed by the lower judicatory.

305 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, in civil cases where a
306 transcript of the evidence and proceedings in the lower judicatory has not been prepared
307 and a transcript is necessary to conduct a review under this chapter, the petitioner shall
308 prepare a transcript at the petitioner's expense from recollection or otherwise only if the
309 petitioner is financially able to pay the costs of transcribing.

310 (c) In civil cases, a lower judicatory may require the parties to share the cost of reporting
311 or transcribing the evidence and proceedings in the lower judicatory; provided, however,
312 that a lower judicatory shall not require a party to share such costs if that party is
313 financially unable to pay. If the lower judicatory determines that any or all of the parties
314 are financially unable to pay such costs, the lower judicatory, in its discretion, may
315 authorize the trial of the case to go unreported.

316 (d) Any party shall have the right to have any criminal or civil case in a lower judicatory
317 reported or transcribed at the party's own expense.

318 (e) If a proceeding in a lower judicatory is reported, the court reporter shall report and
319 transcribe all:

320 (1) Motions;

321 (2) Colloquies;

322 (3) Objections;

323 (4) Rulings;

324 (5) Evidence, whether admitted or stricken on objection or otherwise;

325 (6) Copies or summaries of all documentary evidence;

326 (7) The charge of the court; and

327 (8) Other proceedings before the court.

328 (f) If a proceeding in a lower judiciary is reported, the lower judiciary shall ensure that
329 all matters listed in subsection (e) of this Code section are included in any transcript or
330 record transferred to the reviewing court.

331 (g) If matters in a lower judiciary are not reported, such as objections to oral argument,
332 misconduct of the jury, or other like instances, and a party requests a transcript of such
333 matters, the lower judiciary shall order a transcript be prepared from recollection or
334 otherwise and included as a part of the record transferred to the reviewing court.

335 (h) A transcript of the proceedings in a lower judiciary shall not be reduced to narrative
336 form unless all parties agree; but if the transcript of the evidence and proceedings is not
337 available and the transcript is prepared from recollection, such a transcript may be prepared
338 in narrative form.

339 (i) If a court reporter transcribes the evidence and proceedings in the lower judiciary, the
340 court reporter shall complete the transcript and file the original and one copy of the
341 transcript with the clerk of the lower judiciary along with the court reporter's certificate
342 attesting to its correctness. Upon filing of the transcript by the court reporter, the transcript
343 shall become part of the record.

344 (j) The clerk of the lower judiciary shall ensure that a true copy of the transcript of the
345 evidence and proceedings in the lower judiciary is included in the record transmitted to
346 the reviewing court under this chapter.

347 (k) If the parties cannot agree regarding whether the transcript or record truly or fully
348 discloses what transpired in the proceedings in the lower judiciary, the lower judiciary
349 shall schedule a hearing with notice to all parties to resolve the dispute and conform the
350 record to the truth.

351 (l) A transcript of evidence and proceedings that is prepared from recollection with an
352 attached statement that all parties agree to its contents shall carry the same authority as a
353 transcript prepared by a court reporter; but if the parties cannot agree regarding the
354 correctness of a transcript prepared from recollection, the lower judicatory shall decide
355 whether it is correct. If the lower judicatory is unable to recall what transpired in the case
356 under review, the lower judicatory shall issue a decision stating that fact. The lower
357 judicatory's decision under this subsection is final and not subject to review.

358 (m) If anything material to any party is omitted from or misstated in the record under
359 review, the parties may stipulate, or the lower judicatory may direct, that the omission or
360 misstatement be corrected before or after the record is transmitted to the reviewing court.
361 The clerk of the lower judicatory shall promptly transmit to the reviewing court any
362 correction of the record made after the record is transmitted to the reviewing court.

363 (n) The lower judicatory may transmit a supplemental record to the reviewing court.

364 (o) The lower judicatory or the reviewing court may order the clerk of the lower judicatory
365 to send up any original documents, exhibits, or other items in the case under review. The
366 reviewing court shall return such original documents, exhibits, or other items to the lower
367 judicatory after the final disposition of the case under review.

368 (p) If a lower judicatory does not allow a party to file a document for inclusion in the
369 record for a petition for review, such party may file the document in the reviewing court
370 with an attached notation of the lower judicatory's disallowance. In such case, the
371 document shall become part of the record under review.

372 (q) If all parties agree, in lieu of a transcript of the evidence and proceedings in the lower
373 judicatory, they may file in the lower judicatory a stipulation of the case showing how the
374 question under review arose and was decided along with a statement of facts. In such
375 cases, the parties shall provide sufficient information in the stipulation and statement of
376 facts to enable the reviewing court to conduct a review. Such stipulation and statement of

377 facts must be approved by the lower judiciary prior to transmission to the reviewing court
378 as part of the record.

379 5-3-15.

380 (a) Upon being served with a copy of the petition for review and unless otherwise ordered
381 by the reviewing court, the clerk of the lower judiciary shall retain the original of the
382 corresponding record and transmit a true copy of the record to the reviewing court
383 within 30 days, or within fewer days if otherwise required by law, after the copy of the
384 petition for review is served on the clerk of the lower judiciary.

385 (b) If known or reasonably believed to be the case, the clerk in the lower judiciary shall
386 notify the reviewing court if a petitioner in a criminal case is confined in jail or otherwise
387 incarcerated at the time the record is transmitted from the lower judiciary. Such notice
388 shall accompany the record transmitted from the lower judiciary.

389 (c) If no record is available for transmission to the reviewing court, the clerk of the lower
390 judiciary shall notify the lower judiciary accordingly so that further action may be taken
391 pursuant to this chapter.

392 (d) If the clerk of the lower judiciary does not transmit the record to the reviewing court
393 within 30 days after being served with a copy of the petition for review, the petitioner shall
394 notify the reviewing court, which then shall order the clerk of the lower judiciary to
395 promptly transmit the record or state the reason for the delay.

396 5-3-16.

397 (a) The payment of all costs accrued in a lower judiciary shall not be required in order
398 to file a petition for review under this chapter.

399 (b) Except to the extent prohibited by law, no petition for review shall be heard in a
400 reviewing court unless the petitioner:

401 (1) Pays all unpaid costs owed to the lower judiciary within 30 days after receiving
402 notice of such costs; or

403 (2) Files an affidavit of indigence with the reviewing court stating that the petitioner is
404 unable to pay the costs owed to the lower judiciary because of indigence.

405 (c) No appeal shall be dismissed by a reviewing court because of nonpayment of the costs
406 owed to a lower judiciary unless the petitioner has been ordered by the reviewing court
407 to pay such costs and has failed to comply with such order.

408 (d) An executor, administrator of an estate, or other trustee, when defending an action in
409 such capacity or when solely defending an estate's title, may file a petition for review
410 without paying costs as required by this Code section and without giving a bond and
411 security as provided in Code Section 5-3-17; provided, however, that, if a judgment is
412 obtained against an executor, administrator of an estate, or other trustee and not the assets
413 of the estate, then the executor, administrator of an estate, or other trustee shall pay such
414 costs as required by this Code section and give security if required under Code
415 Section 5-3-17.

416 (e) Unless the petitioner in a civil case files an affidavit of indigence with the reviewing
417 court stating that the petitioner is unable to pay the costs owed to the lower judiciary
418 because of indigence, the petitioner in a civil case shall obtain and file with the reviewing
419 court a certificate of payment of costs from the lower judiciary certifying that the
420 petitioner has paid all costs owed to the lower judiciary. Such certificate shall be:

421 (1) Filed in the reviewing court within five days after issuance by the lower judiciary;
422 and

423 (2) Signed by a judge, clerk, official, member, or other designated representative of the
424 lower judiciary.

5-3-17.

(a) Except to the extent prohibited by law, the filing of a petition for review under this chapter shall act as supersedeas and shall suspend but not vacate a final judgment of a lower judicatory.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, a supersedeas bond need not be given by a petitioner under this chapter.

(c)(1) Except as provided in subsection (d) of Code Section 5-3-16 or otherwise prohibited by law, the reviewing court may require that a supersedeas bond be given with good security while a petition for review is under review.

(2) In criminal cases where a bond is required pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, the lower judicatory shall order that the petitioner be released from custody upon the giving of a bond by the petitioner.

(d) If a petitioner fails to give a bond when a bond is required, the supersedeas provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section shall cease unless the petitioner files with the reviewing court an affidavit stating that because of indigence the petitioner is unable to give a bond.

(e) A bond set pursuant to this chapter shall not exceed the total amount of damages, fines, fees, penalties, and surcharges imposed by the lower judicatory in the case under review.

(f) Bonds given pursuant to this chapter are subject to the following requirements:

(1) If a person has been convicted of any criminal or quasi-criminal offense or a violation of any ordinance, bond shall be payable to the state unless such conviction is in a municipal court, in which case it shall be payable to the municipality under which such court exists. This paragraph shall not apply to constitutional city courts or state courts;

(2) In civil cases, the petitioner shall make a bond payable to the respondent;

(3) The petitioner must agree under oath to personally appear and abide by the final judgment, decision, order, or sentence in the case;

451 (4) If a secured bond is required, the person providing security shall swear under oath
452 that he or she can fulfill the bond obligation; and

453 (5) The giving of a bond shall be consistent with the Constitution of the United States
454 and the laws and the Constitution of this state, including, but not limited to,
455 Code Section 17-6-1.

456 (g) A bond may be forfeited in the same manner as any other bond in any court having
457 jurisdiction, except that a bond payable to a municipality may be forfeited as prescribed in
458 a municipal ordinance of such municipality.

459 (h) A supersedeas provided for in this Code section shall suspend the final judgment of the
460 lower judicatory until the petition for review is decided or dismissed by the reviewing court
461 or by an appellate court upon appeal, provided that the petitioner applies for and procures
462 the necessary writs for reviewing the decision complained of within the time prescribed.

463 (i) If a petition for review is filed by a petitioner's attorney, the petitioner's attorney shall
464 be authorized to sign the name of the petitioner to the supersedeas bond. In such cases, the
465 petitioner shall be bound by the supersedeas bond as though the petitioner had personally
466 signed it.

467 (j) An action may be brought on the bond given under this chapter in any court having
468 jurisdiction.

469 (k) A valid bond may replace or be amended to replace a void bond or no bond at all at any
470 time under this Code section.

471 (l) A petitioner's surety, if any, shall be bound by the judgment in a petition for review.
472 A surety compelled to pay off a debt or damages for which judgment is entered under this
473 chapter shall only have recourse against the surety's principal.

474 (m) When several partners or joint contractors bring or defend a claim, any one of the
475 partners or joint contractors may file a petition for review in the name of the firm or joint
476 contractors and sign the name of the firm or joint contractors to a bond if a bond is required

477 by the reviewing court. Such petition for review and bond shall be binding on the firm and
478 the joint contractors as though they had signed it themselves.

479 5-3-18.

480 (a)(1) After a petition for review is reviewed under this chapter, the reviewing court shall
481 render a final decision:

482 (A) Entering a judgment upon the petition for review;

483 (B) Ordering dismissal of the petition for review;

484 (C) Remanding a petition for review back to the lower judicatory with instructions; or

485 (D) A combination thereof.

486 (2) If the final decision rendered pursuant to this Code section is a judgment upon the
487 petition for review, it shall be in writing and specify whether the reviewing court is
488 affirming, reversing, or vacating the final judgment of the lower judicatory.

489 (3) If the final decision rendered pursuant to this Code section remands the petition for
490 review back to the lower judicatory, it shall provide instructions to the lower judicatory
491 for further proceedings.

492 (b) The clerk of the reviewing court shall serve a copy of the reviewing court's final
493 decision regarding a petition for review on the clerk of the lower judicatory and on all
494 parties named in the petition for review within five days after the date such decision was
495 rendered. The clerk of the lower judicatory shall promptly notify each judge, official, or
496 member of the lower judicatory who rendered the final judgment appealed of any final
497 decision served on the clerk of the lower judicatory. If the lower judicatory does not have
498 a clerk, then the clerk of the reviewing court shall serve a copy of the reviewing court's
499 final decision on each judge, official, or member of the lower judicatory who rendered the
500 final judgment appealed.

501 (c) A final decision by the reviewing court under this chapter may be appealed to the
502 appropriate appellate court as prescribed by law.

503 5-3-19.

504 (a) If a petition for review is dismissed or withdrawn pursuant to this chapter, the rights
505 of all parties shall be the same as if no appeal had been filed. Notwithstanding any other
506 provision of law, the dismissal or withdrawal of a petition for review under this chapter
507 shall:

508 (1) Dismiss the petition for review;

509 (2) Not dismiss the petitioner's underlying case from the lower judicatory or vacate the
510 final judgment of the lower judicatory; and

511 (3) Reinstate the final judgment of the lower judicatory as if the petition for review had
512 not been filed.

513 (b) This Code section shall apply to all cases appealed under this chapter regardless of the
514 standard of review applied under Code Section 5-3-5.

515 5-3-20.

516 Reasonable and necessary attorney's fees and expenses of litigation may be assessed for
517 frivolous actions or defenses in a petition for review as provided in Code Section 9-15-14.

518 5-3-21.

519 (a) If a petition for review is sustained and a final decision regarding the case is made by
520 the reviewing court, the petitioner may have judgment entered for the sum recovered by
521 the petitioner in the lower judicatory, the costs paid to obtain the petition for review, and
522 the costs in the reviewing court.

523 (b) If a petition for review is returned to the lower judicatory for a new hearing, the
524 petitioner shall have judgment entered for the costs in the reviewing court only, leaving the
525 costs paid to obtain the petition for review to be awarded upon the final judgment of the
526 lower judicatory after the new hearing.

(c) If a petition for review is dismissed and a final decision regarding the case is made by the reviewing court, the respondent in a petition for review may have judgment entered in the reviewing court against the petitioner and the petitioner's security for the sum recovered by the respondent, together with the costs in the reviewing court.

(d) If a petition for review is returned to the lower judiciary and the lower judiciary decides the case in favor of the respondent, then the security on the petition for review bond shall be included in the lower judiciary's final judgment."

SECTION 1-2.

Said title is further amended by repealing in its entirety Chapter 4, relating to certiorari to superior court, and designating said chapter as reserved.

PART II.

SECTION 2-1.

Code Section 3-2-35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to seizure of contraband by commissioner and agents regarding alcoholic beverages, proceedings upon seizure, hearing on entitlement to seized items, appeals, and disposition of items upon which taxes have been paid, is amended by revising subsection (e) as follows:

"(e) An appeal from the commissioner's order may be taken to the Superior Court of Fulton County by filing with the commissioner, within 15 days from the date of the decision, a ~~notice of appeal to~~ copy of the petition for review filed in the Superior Court of Fulton County. The proceedings on the petition for review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5 except as provided otherwise in this Code section. The appeal shall be based upon the record made before the commissioner, ~~and the commissioner, upon the filing of a notice of appeal,~~ The commissioner shall transmit the record and appropriate documents to the superior court within 30 days ~~from~~ after the date of the filing of notice of appeal ~~the~~

551 petition for review is received. The superior court shall review the record for errors of law,
552 violation of constitutional or statutory provisions, violation of the statutory authority of the
553 agency, lawfulness of the procedure, lack of any evidence to support the decision, and
554 arbitrariness and abuse of discretion. However, the court shall not substitute its judgment
555 for that of the hearing officer as to the weight of evidence on questions of fact."

556 **SECTION 2-2.**

557 Code Section 4-8-23 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to investigations
558 by dog control officer, notice to owner, hearings, determinations by hearing authority, and
559 judicial review, is amended by revising subsection (f) as follows:

560 "(f) Judicial review of the authority's final decision may be had in accordance with Code
561 Section 15-9-30.9. Judicial review of a probate court's final decision shall be in
562 accordance with Code Section ~~5-3-2~~ 5-3-4 and costs shall be paid as provided in Code
563 Section ~~5-3-22~~ 5-3-16."

564 **SECTION 2-3.**

565 Code Section 10-1-787 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to finality of
566 arbitrator's decision under the 'Georgia Lemon Law,' appeals by manufacturers, and time for
567 compliance with arbitrator's decision, is amended by revising subsection (a) as follows:

568 "(a) The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators is final unless a party to the arbitration,
569 within 30 days of entry of the decision, appeals the decision to the superior court. A party
570 who appeals a decision shall follow the procedures set forth in ~~Article 2 of~~ Chapter 3 of
571 Title 5, and any appeal shall be de novo; however, the decision of the arbitrator or
572 arbitrators shall be admissible in evidence."

SECTION 2-4.

Code Section 10-14-22 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to judicial appeal of order of Secretary of State regarding cemetery and funeral services, is amended by revising subsections (a) and (b) as follows:

"(a)(1) An appeal may be taken from any order of the Secretary of State resulting from a hearing held in accordance with the provisions of Code Section 10-14-23 by any person adversely affected thereby to the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia, by serving on the Secretary of State, within 20 days after the date of entry of such order, a ~~written notice of appeal~~ copy of the petition for review filed in the Superior Court of Fulton County and signed by the petitioner, signed by the appellant, stating:

(1)(A) The order from which the appeal is taken;

(2)(B) The ground upon which a reversal or modification of such order is sought; and

(3)(C) A demand for a certified transcript of the record of such order.

(2) The proceedings on the petition for review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5 except as provided in this Code section.

(b) Upon receipt of such ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review, the Secretary of State shall, within ten days thereafter, make, certify, and deliver to the ~~appellant~~ clerk of the Superior Court of Fulton County a transcript of the record of the order from which the appeal is taken, provided that the ~~appellant~~ petitioner shall pay the reasonable costs of such transcript. ~~The appellant shall, within five days after receipt of such transcript, file such transcript and a copy of the notice of appeal with the clerk of the court. Said notice of~~ appeal petition for review and transcript of the record shall constitute ~~appellant's~~ petitioner's complaint. Said complaint shall thereupon be entered on the trial calendar of the court in accordance with the court's normal procedures."

SECTION 2-5.

Code Section 12-3-194.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to police and legislative powers of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, appointment of peace officers, jurisdiction and venue of park offenses, and sale of confederate memorabilia, is amended by revising subsection (c) as follows:

"(c) For purposes of this Code section, the Magistrate Court of DeKalb County shall have jurisdiction and authority to hear and try those offenses occurring within the limits of Stone Mountain Park which violate the ordinances of the association and to punish violations of such ordinances, all in the manner and to the extent prescribed in Article 4 of Chapter 10 of Title 15. The State Court of DeKalb County shall have jurisdiction and authority to hear and try all cases removed from the Magistrate Court of DeKalb County for jury trial by any defendant charged with one or more violations of the ordinances of the association. The Superior Court of DeKalb County shall have jurisdiction to review all convictions by ~~certiorari~~ petition for review to the superior court. The proceedings on such petitions for review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5. The jurisdiction and authority of the courts of DeKalb County provided for in this Code section shall be in addition to and not in limitation of the jurisdiction and authority of such courts as may be now or hereafter provided."

SECTION 2-6.

Code Section 12-3-236.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to adoption and enforcement of ordinances and resolutions of the Jekyll Island State Park Authority, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) For purposes of this Code section, the Magistrate Court of Glynn County shall have jurisdiction and authority to hear and try those cases occurring within the limits of Jekyll Island in which a person is charged with violating an ordinance of the authority and to punish violations of such ordinances, all in the manner and to the extent prescribed in

623 Article 4 of Chapter 10 of Title 15. The State Court of Glynn County shall have
 624 jurisdiction and authority to hear and try all cases removed from the Magistrate Court of
 625 Glynn County for jury trial by any defendant charged with one or more violations of the
 626 ordinances of the authority. The Superior Court of Glynn County shall have jurisdiction
 627 to review all convictions by ~~certiorari~~ petition for review to the superior court. The
 628 proceedings on such petitions for review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5. The
 629 jurisdiction and authority of the courts of Glynn County provided for in this Code section
 630 shall be in addition to and not in limitation of the jurisdiction and authority of such courts
 631 as may be now or hereafter provided."

632 **SECTION 2-7.**

633 Code Section 15-6-9 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to authority of
 634 superior court judges generally, is amended by revising paragraph (1) as follows:

635 "(1) To grant for their respective circuits writs of ~~certiorari~~, supersedeas, quo warranto,
 636 mandamus, habeas corpus, and bail in actions ex delicto;"

637 **SECTION 2-8.**

638 Code Section 15-9-120 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to definitions
 639 regarding probate court jury trials and appeals, is amended by revising paragraph (1) as
 640 follows:

641 "(1) 'Civil case' means those civil matters:

- 642 (A) Over which the judge of the probate court exercises judicial powers;
- 643 (B) Within the original, exclusive, or general subject matter jurisdiction of the
 644 probate court; and
- 645 (C) Which, if not for this article and Code Section 5-6-33, could be appealed to
 646 superior court for a de novo investigation with the right to a jury trial under Code
 647 Sections ~~5-3-2~~ 5-3-4 and ~~5-3-29~~ 5-3-5."

SECTION 2-9.

Code Section 15-10-41 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to no jury trials in magistrate courts and appeal from magistrate courts, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

"(b)(1) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, appeals may be had from judgments returned in the magistrate court to the state court of the county or to the superior court of the county and the same provisions now provided for by general law for appeals contained in ~~Article 2~~ of Chapter 3 of Title 5 shall be applicable to appeals from the magistrate court, the same to be a de novo appeal. The provisions of ~~said Article 2~~ of Chapter 3 of Title 5 shall also apply to appeals to state court.

(2) No appeal shall lie from a default judgment or from a dismissal for want of prosecution after a nonappearance of a plaintiff for trial. Any voluntary dismissal by the plaintiff or by order of the court for want of prosecution shall be without prejudice except that the filing of a second such dismissal shall operate as an adjudication upon the merits. Review, including review of a denial of a postjudgment motion to vacate a judgment, shall be by ~~certiorari~~ petition for review to the state court of that county or to the superior court of that county."

SECTION 2-10.

Article 4 of Chapter 10 of Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to violation of ordinances of counties and state authorities, is amended by revising Code Section 15-10-65, relating to certiorari to superior court from magistrate court, as follows:

"15-10-65.

Review of convictions shall be by ~~certiorari~~ petition for review to the superior court."

SECTION 2-11.

Code Section 15-14-7 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to destruction of court reporter notes, how authorized, petition, grounds, notice, and order, is amended by revising subsection (c) as follows:

"(c) The petition shall certify one of the following:

(1) That the action is a civil action in which no ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review has been filed, that the court reporter has not been requested or ordered to transcribe the evidence and other proceedings, and that a period of not less than 37 months has elapsed since the last date upon which a ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review in the action could have been filed; or

(2) That the action is one in which the court reporter has been requested or ordered pursuant to law to transcribe the evidence and other proceedings, that the record has been transcribed, and that a period of not less than 12 months has elapsed from the date upon which the remittitur from the appeal has been docketed in the trial court."

SECTION 2-12.

Code Section 15-21A-6 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to additional filing fees, application fee for indigent defense services, and remittance of funds, is amended by revising subsection (a) as follows:

"(a) In addition to all other legal costs, there shall be charged to the filing party and collected by the clerk an additional filing fee of \$15.00 in each civil action or case filed in the superior, state, recorder's, mayor's, and magistrate courts except that municipalities, counties, and political subdivisions shall be exempt from such fee. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, such fee shall apply to all adoptions, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, trade name registrations, applications for change of name, and all other proceedings of a civil nature. Any matter which is docketed upon the official dockets of the enumerated

696 courts and to which a number is assigned shall be subject to such fee, whether such matter
697 is contested or not."

698 **SECTION 2-13.**

699 Code Section 15-21A-6.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to judicial
700 operations fund fee and collection and reporting procedure, is amended by revising
701 subsection (a) as follows:

702 "(a) In addition to all other legal costs, there shall be charged to the filing party and
703 collected by the clerk an additional filing fee of \$125.00, to be known as a judicial
704 operations fund fee, in each civil action or case filed in a superior court except that the
705 state, including, but not limited to, its departments, agencies, boards, bureaus,
706 commissions, public corporations, and authorities, municipalities, counties, and political
707 subdivisions shall be exempt from such fee. Without limiting the generality of the
708 foregoing, such fee shall apply to all adoptions, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, trade name
709 registrations, applications for change of name, and all other proceedings of a civil nature.
710 Any matter which is docketed upon the official dockets of the superior court and to which
711 a number is assigned shall be subject to such fee, whether such matter is contested or not;
712 provided, however, that the judicial operations fund fee shall not apply to the issuance of
713 certificates of appointment and reappointment of notaries public."

714 **SECTION 2-14.**

715 Code Section 17-6-1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to when offenses
716 bailable, procedure, schedule of bails, and appeal bonds, is amended by revising
717 subsection (g) as follows:

718 "(g) No appeal bond shall be granted to any person who has been convicted of murder,
719 rape, aggravated sodomy, armed robbery, home invasion in any degree, aggravated child
720 molestation, child molestation, kidnapping, trafficking in cocaine or marijuana, aggravated

stalking, or aircraft hijacking and who has been sentenced to serve a period of incarceration of five years or more. The granting of an appeal bond to a person who has been convicted of any other felony offense or of any misdemeanor offense involving an act of family violence as defined in Code Section 19-13-1, or of any offense delineated as a high and aggravated misdemeanor or of any offense set forth in Code Section 40-6-391, shall be in the discretion of the convicting court. Appeal bonds shall terminate when the right of appeal terminates, and such bonds shall not be effective as to any petition for review or petition or application for writ of certiorari unless the court in which the petition for review or petition or application is filed so specifies."

SECTION 2-15.

Part 2 of Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 22 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to acquisition of right to flood roads and highways under eminent domain, is amended by revising Code Section 22-3-44, relating to appeal to superior court, as follows:

"22-3-44.

Within 30 days after the award of condemnation is made pursuant to Part 4 of Article 1 of Chapter 2 of this title or pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 2 of this title, any party may appeal to the superior court of the county in which the public roads or highways lie by filing a petition for review with ~~the judge of the probate court of the county a written notice of appeal. Within ten days after his receipt of the notice, the judge shall transmit the notice~~ to the superior court. The trial on such an appeal shall be de novo. The proceedings on the petition for review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5."

SECTION 2-16.

Code Section 31-6-44.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to judicial review regarding the certificate of need program under state health planning and development, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) In the event a party seeks judicial review, the proceedings for such review shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5 except as provided otherwise in this Code section. If a party seeks judicial review, the department shall, within 30 days ~~of the filing of the notice of appeal with~~ after being served with a copy of the petition for review filed in the superior court, transmit certified copies of all documents and papers in its file together with a transcript of the testimony taken and its findings of fact and decision to the clerk of the superior court to which the case has been appealed. The case so appealed may then be brought by either party upon ten days' written notice to the other before the superior court for a hearing upon such record, subject to an assignment of the case for hearing by the court; provided, however, that, if the court does not hear the case within 120 days of the date of docketing in the superior court, the decision of the department shall be considered affirmed by operation of law unless a hearing originally scheduled to be heard within the 120 days has been continued to a date certain by order of the court. In the event a hearing is held later than 90 days after the date of docketing in the superior court because same has been continued to a date certain by order of the court, the decision of the department shall be considered affirmed by operation of law if no order of the court disposing of the issues on appeal has been entered within 30 days after the date of the continued hearing. If a case is heard within 120 days from the date of docketing in the superior court, the decision of the department shall be considered affirmed by operation of law if no order of the court ~~dispositive~~ disposing of the issues on appeal has been entered within 30 days of the date of the hearing."

SECTION 2-17.

Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 32 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions regarding acquisition of property for transportation purposes, is amended in Code Section 32-3-11, relating to power of judge to set aside, vacate, and annul

771 declaration of taking, issuance and service on condemnor of rule nisi, and hearing, by
772 revising subsection (c) as follows:

773 "(c) If the condemnee desires to raise such questions as are outlined in subsection (b) of
774 this Code section, the same shall be done by proper pleadings, in the form of a petition for
775 review addressed to the judge of the superior court having jurisdiction thereof, filed in the
776 same proceedings not later than 30 days subsequent to the date of service upon the
777 condemnee of the declaration of taking. The presiding judge shall thereupon cause a rule
778 nisi to be issued and served upon the condemnor, requiring him or her to show cause at a
779 time and place designated by the judge why the title acquired by the declaration of taking
780 should not be vacated and set aside in the same way and manner as is now provided for
781 setting aside deeds acquired by fraud. Such hearing shall be had not earlier than 15 days
782 from the time of service of the rule nisi upon the condemnor, nor later than 60 days from
783 the date of filing of the declaration of taking, and with the right of appeal by either party,
784 as in other cases. A petition for review filed pursuant to this subsection shall be governed
785 by the provisions of Chapter 3 of Title 5, except to the extent any such provision is in
786 conflict with any provision of this article."

787 **SECTION 2-18.**

788 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 32-3-14, relating to filing a notice
789 of appeal, as follows:

790 "32-3-14.

791 If the owner, or any of the owners, or any person having a claim against or interest in the
792 property is dissatisfied with the amount of compensation as estimated in the declaration of
793 taking and deposited in court, as provided for in Code Section 32-3-7, such person or
794 persons, or any of them, shall have the right, at any time subsequent to the filing of the
795 declaration and the deposit of the fund into court, but not later than 30 days following the
796 date of the service as provided for in Code Sections 32-3-8 and 32-3-9, to file with the

797 court a ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review, the same to be in writing and made a part of
798 the record in the proceedings."

799 **SECTION 2-19.**

800 Said article is further amended in Code Section 32-3-16, relating to appeal to jury, evidence
801 to be heard on appeal, and subsequent review of issues not brought before jury, by revising
802 subsections (a) and (c) as follows:

803 "(a) After the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review has been filed as provided in Code
804 Section 32-3-14, it shall be the duty of the court at the next term thereof, which shall
805 convene not earlier than 30 days subsequent to the date of service, as provided for in Code
806 Sections 32-3-8 and 32-3-9, to cause an issue to be made and tried by a jury as to the value
807 of the property or interest taken and the consequential damages to property or interests not
808 taken, with the same right to move for a new trial and file a ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for
809 review as in other cases at law, provided that an interlocutory award has not become final
810 pursuant to Code Section 32-3-15."

811 "(c) If, for any reason, the issues made by the filing of the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for
812 review provided for in this Code section are not tried by a jury as to the value of the
813 property or interest taken and the consequential damages to the property or interests not
814 taken, at the next term of the court after the filing of such appeal, such fact shall not be
815 cause for dismissal of the appeal and the issues made by such appeal shall be subject to trial
816 at any future term of the court."

817 **SECTION 2-20.**

818 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 32-3-17.1, relating to decisions
819 upon questions of law, power of judge to give necessary orders and directions, and jury trial
820 in open court only, as follows:

821 "32-3-17.1.
822 All questions of law arising upon the pleadings or in any other way arising from the cause,
823 subsequent to the filing of the declaration of taking and the deposit of the fund, and
824 subsequent to the filing of ~~notice of appeal~~ a petition for review, if any, shall be passed on
825 by the presiding judge who may, from time to time, make such orders and give such
826 directions as are necessary to speed the cause, and as may be consistent with justice and
827 due process of law; but no jury trial shall be had except in open court."

828 **SECTION 2-21.**

829 Code Section 33-2-27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to pleading and
830 procedure of judicial review and powers of a reviewing court generally, is amended by
831 revising subsections (a) and (c) as follows:

832 "(a) The form of proceeding for judicial review shall be by a petition for review in the
833 Superior Court of Fulton County, a copy of which shall be served upon the Commissioner
834 immediately. The proceedings on the petition for review shall be governed by the
835 provisions of Chapter 3 of Title 5, except to the extent any such provision is in conflict
836 with any provision of this title."

837 "(c) The petition for review or other pleading in which judicial review shall be sought shall
838 plainly specify the action complained of and shall set forth the relief sought and, without
839 excessive detail, the facts and circumstances supporting the petitioner's right to such relief."

840 **SECTION 2-22.**

841 Code Section 33-6-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to issuance of cease
842 and desist orders, issuance of orders providing for other relief, change in orders, and date on
843 which orders appealable, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

844 "(b) The Commissioner may, at any time before the serving of ~~notice of appeal~~ a copy of
845 the petition for review filed in the Superior Court of Fulton County upon him or her, as

provided for in Code Section 33-6-11, or after the expiration of the time allowed by law for the serving of the ~~notice~~ petition for review, if no ~~notice~~ petition for review has been thus served, amend or set aside in whole or in part any order issued by ~~him~~ the Commissioner under this Code section whenever in ~~his~~ the Commissioner's opinion the facts and circumstances surrounding the case have so changed as to require the action or if the public interest shall so require. No change of an order in a manner unfavorable to the person charged or to the parties at interest shall be made except after notice and opportunity for hearing. The date of the Commissioner's last order shall be the point of time from which it may be reviewed by appeal."

SECTION 2-23.

Code Section 34-9-105 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to when workers' compensation award deemed final, appeal to superior court, grounds for setting aside decisions, and appeal to Court of Appeals, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) Either party to the dispute may, within 20 days from the date of any such final award or within 20 days from the date of any other final order or judgment of the members of the board, but not thereafter, appeal from the decision in such final award or from any other final decision of the board to the superior court of the county in which the injury occurred or, if the injury occurred outside the state, to the superior court of the county in which the original hearing was held, in the manner and upon the grounds provided in Chapter 3 of Title 5, except to the extent any such provision is in conflict with any provision of this Code section. ~~Said appeal~~ A copy of the petition for review shall be filed with served on the clerk for the board in writing stating generally the grounds upon which such appeal is sought. In the event of an appeal, the board shall, within 30 days of ~~the filing~~ such service of the notice of appeal with the board, transmit certified copies of all documents and papers in its file together with a transcript of the testimony taken and its findings of fact and decision to the clerk of the superior court to which the case is appealable, as provided in

872 this subsection. The case so appealed may then be brought by either party upon ten days'
873 written notice to the other before the superior court for a hearing upon such record, subject
874 to an assignment of the case for hearing by the court; provided, however, that, if the court
875 does not hear the case within 60 days of the date of docketing in the superior court, the
876 decision of the board shall be considered affirmed by operation of law unless a hearing
877 originally scheduled to be heard within the 60 days has been continued to a date certain by
878 order of the court. In the event a hearing is held later than 60 days after the date of
879 docketing in the superior court because same has been continued to a date certain by order
880 of the court, the decision of the board shall be considered affirmed by operation of law if
881 no order of the court disposing of the issues on appeal has been entered within 20 days after
882 the date of the continued hearing. If a case is heard within 60 days from the date of
883 docketing in the superior court, the decision of the board shall be considered affirmed by
884 operation of law if no order of the court ~~dispositive~~ disposing of the issues on appeal has
885 been entered within 20 days of the date of the hearing."

886 SECTION 2-24.

887 Code Section 36-15-9 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to collection of
888 additional costs in county court cases, amount, determination of need as prerequisite to
889 collection, and collection in certain criminal cases, is amended by revising subsection (a) as
890 follows:

891 "(a) For the purpose of providing funds for those uses specified in Code Section 36-15-7,
892 a sum not to exceed \$5.00, in addition to all other legal costs, may be charged and collected
893 in each action or case, either civil or criminal, including, without limiting the generality of
894 the foregoing, all adoptions, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, applications by personal
895 representatives for leave to sell or reinvest, trade name registrations, applications for
896 change of name, and all other proceedings of civil or criminal or quasi-criminal nature,
897 filed in the superior, state, probate, and any other courts of record, except county recorders'

898 courts or municipal courts. The amount of such additional costs to be charged and
899 collected, if any, in each such case shall be fixed by the chief judge of the superior court
900 of the circuit in which such county is located. Such additional costs shall not be charged
901 and collected unless the chief judge first determines that a need exists for a law library in
902 the county. The clerk of each and every such court in such counties in which such a law
903 library is established shall collect such fees and remit the same to the treasurer of the board
904 of trustees of the county law library of the county in which the case was brought, on the
905 first day of each month. Where fees collected by the treasurer have been allocated for the
906 purpose of establishing or maintaining the codification of county ordinances, the allocated
907 amount shall in turn be remitted by the treasurer to the county governing authority for said
908 purpose on a monthly basis or as otherwise agreed by the treasurer and the county
909 governing authority. The county ordinance code provided for in subsection (a) of Code
910 Section 36-15-7 shall be maintained by the county governing authority. When the costs
911 in criminal cases are not collected, the cost provided in this Code section shall be paid from
912 the fine and bond forfeiture fund of the court in which the case is filed, before any other
913 disbursement or distribution of such fines or forfeitures is made."

914 **SECTION 2-25.**

915 Code Section 36-32-2.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to removal of
916 municipal judges, is amended by revising subsection (e) as follows:

917 "(e) Removal proceedings shall consist of an open and public hearing held by the
918 governing authority of the municipal corporation, provided that the judge against whom
919 such charges have been brought shall be furnished a copy of the charges at least ten days
920 prior to the hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, the governing authority of the
921 municipal corporation shall determine whether or not to remove the judge from office. The
922 governing authority of the municipal corporation may adopt rules governing the procedures
923 at such hearings, provided that such hearings comport with due process. The right of

924 ~~certiorari from the~~ to appeal a decision to remove a judge from office shall exist, and such
925 ~~certiorari shall be obtained under the sanction of a judge of the~~ The decision to remove a
926 judge from office pursuant to this Code section shall be appealed by filing a petition for
927 review in the superior court of the circuit in which the governing authority of the municipal
928 corporation is situated. Such appeals shall be governed by Chapter 3 of Title 5."

929 **SECTION 2-26.**

930 Article 3 of Chapter 74 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
931 county and municipal enforcement boards created prior to January 1, 2003, is amended by
932 revising Code Section 36-74-48, relating to appeals to superior court, as follows:

933 "36-74-48.

934 An aggrieved party, including the local governing body, may appeal a final administrative
935 order of an enforcement board to the superior court of the county in which the subject
936 property is located. Such an appeal shall be in the form of a ~~writ of certiorari~~ petition for
937 review governed by Chapter ~~4~~ 3 of Title 5 and shall be heard on the record. ~~An appeal~~ A
938 petition for review shall be filed within 30 days of the execution of the order to be
939 appealed."

940 **SECTION 2-27.**

941 Chapter 3 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to examination,
942 treatment, etc., for mental illness, is amended by revising Code Section 37-3-150, relating
943 to right to appeal orders of probate court, juvenile court, or hearing examiner, payment of
944 costs of appeal, right to subsequent appeal, and right to legal counsel on appeal, as follows:

945 "37-3-150.

946 The patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney may appeal any order of
947 the probate court or hearing officer rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the
948 superior court of the county in which the proceeding was held, except as otherwise

provided in Article 6 of Chapter 9 of Title 15, and may appeal any order of the juvenile court rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court. The appeal to the superior court shall be made in the same manner as appeals from the probate court to the superior court, except that the appeal shall be heard before the court sitting without a jury as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days following the date on which the appeal is filed with the clerk of the superior court. The appeal from the order of the juvenile court to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court shall be as provided by law but shall be heard as expeditiously as possible. The patient must pay all costs upon filing any appeal authorized under this Code section or must make an affidavit that he or she is unable to pay costs. The patient shall retain all rights of review of any order of the superior court, the Court of Appeals, or the Supreme Court, as provided by law. The patient shall have a right to counsel or, if unable to afford counsel, shall have counsel appointed for the patient by the court. The appeal rights provided to the patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney in this Code section are in addition to any other appeal rights which the parties may have, and the provision of the right for the patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney to appeal does not deny the right to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to appeal under the general appeal provisions of Code ~~Sections 5-3-2 and 5-3-3~~ Section 5-3-4."

SECTION 2-28.

Chapter 4 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to habilitation of the developmentally disabled generally, is amended by revising Code Section 37-4-110, relating to appeal rights of clients, their representatives, or attorneys, payment of costs of appeal, right of client to subsequent appeal and to legal counsel on appeal, as follows:

"37-4-110.

The client, the client's representatives, or the client's attorney may appeal any order of the probate court or administrative law judge rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the

superior court of the county in which the proceeding was held, except as otherwise provided in Article 6 of Chapter 9 of Title 15, and may appeal any order of the juvenile court rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court. The appeal to the superior court shall be made in the same manner as appeals from the probate court to the superior court, except that the appeal shall be heard before the court sitting without a jury as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days following the date on which the appeal is filed with the clerk of the superior court. The appeal from the order of the juvenile court to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court shall be as provided by law but shall be heard as expeditiously as possible. The client must pay all costs upon filing any appeal authorized under this Code section or must make an affidavit that he or she is unable to pay costs. The client shall retain all rights of review of any order of the superior court, the Court of Appeals, or the Supreme Court as provided by law. The client shall have a right to counsel or, if unable to afford counsel, shall have counsel appointed for the client by the court. The appeal rights provided to the client, the client's representatives, or the client's attorney in this Code section are in addition to any other appeal rights which the parties may have, and the provision of the right for the client, the client's representatives, or the client's attorney to appeal does not deny the right to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to appeal under the general appeal provisions of Code ~~Sections 5-3-2 and 5-3-3~~ Section 5-3-4."

SECTION 2-29.

Chapter 7 of Title 37 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to hospitalization and treatment of alcoholics, drug dependent individuals, and drug abusers, is amended by revising Code Section 37-7-150, relating to right to appeal orders of probate court, juvenile court, or hearing examiner, payment of costs of appeal, right of patient to subsequent appeal, and right of patient to legal counsel on appeal, as follows:

"37-7-150.

The patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney may appeal any order of the probate court or hearing officer rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the superior court of the county in which the proceeding was held, except as otherwise provided in Article 6 of Chapter 9 of Title 15, and may appeal any order of the juvenile court rendered in a proceeding under this chapter to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court. The appeal to the superior court shall be made in the same manner as appeals from the probate court to the superior court, except that the appeal shall be heard before the court sitting without a jury as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days following the date on which the appeal is filed with the clerk of the superior court. The appeal from the order of the juvenile court to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court shall be as provided by law but shall be heard as expeditiously as possible. The patient must pay all costs upon filing any appeal authorized under this Code section or must make an affidavit that he or she is unable to pay costs. The patient shall retain all rights of review of any order of the superior court, the Court of Appeals, or the Supreme Court, as provided by law. The patient shall have a right to counsel or, if unable to afford counsel, shall have counsel appointed for the patient by the court. The appeal rights provided to the patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney in this Code section are in addition to any other appeal rights which the parties may have, and the provision of the right for the patient, the patient's representatives, or the patient's attorney to appeal does not deny the right to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to appeal under the general appeal provisions of Code ~~Sections 5-3-2 and 5-3-3~~ Section 5-3-4."

SECTION 2-30.

Code Section 38-3-64 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to appeal rights of adversely affected parties relative to judicial emergencies and cost of appeal borne by state, is amended by revising subsection (b) as follows:

"(b) A ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review shall be filed no later than 45 days after the expiration of the judicial emergency order, or any modification or extension of a judicial emergency order, from which an appeal is sought. A ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review shall be filed with the clerk of a superior court in any jurisdiction affected by the order and shall be served upon:

(1) The authorized judicial official who issued the order;

(2) The parties to any criminal proceeding or civil litigation in which the appellant is involved which would be affected by the appeal;

(3) The district attorney of the county in which the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review is filed; and

(4) All other parties in any criminal proceeding or civil litigation which would be affected by the appeal; provided, however, that service in this regard shall be accomplished by publishing notice of the filing of the appeal in the newspaper which is the legal organ for the county in which the ~~notice of the appeal~~ petition for review is filed."

SECTION 2-31.

Article 2 of Chapter 13 of Title 40 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to arrests, trials, and appeals regarding prosecution of traffic offenses, is amended by revising Code Section 40-13-28, relating to appeal to superior court and bond, as follows:

"40-13-28.

Any defendant convicted under this article shall have the right of appeal to the superior court. The provisions of ~~Code Sections 5-3-29 and 5-3-30~~ subsections (b) and (c) of Code Section 5-3-5 and subsection (e) of Code Section 5-3-9 shall not apply to appeals under this Code section. Otherwise, the appeal shall be entered as appeals are entered from the probate court to the superior court, provided that the defendant shall be entitled to bail and shall be released from custody upon giving the bond as is provided for appearances in

1052 criminal cases in the courts of this state. Such bond shall have the same conditions as
1053 appearance bonds in criminal cases. The appeal to the superior court shall not be a de novo
1054 investigation before a jury but shall be on the record of the hearing as certified by the judge
1055 of that court who presided at the hearing below."

1056 **SECTION 2-32.**

1057 Code Section 41-2-9 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to county or
1058 municipal ordinances relating to unfit buildings or structures, is amended by revising
1059 subsection (d) as follows:

1060 "(d) Where the abatement action does not commence in the superior court, review of a
1061 court order requiring the repair, alteration, improvement, or demolition of a dwelling,
1062 building, or structure shall be ~~by direct appeal to~~ a de novo proceeding in the superior court
1063 under Code ~~Section 5-3-29~~ Sections 5-3-4 and 5-3-5."

1064 **SECTION 2-33.**

1065 Chapter 17 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the "Georgia
1066 Charitable Solicitations Act of 1988," is amended in Code Section 43-17-4, relating to
1067 bonding requirements for registered paid solicitors and deposits in lieu of bond, by revising
1068 subsections (c) and (d) as follows:

1069 "(c) Such deposits shall be held for the benefit of all persons to whom the applicant is
1070 liable for damages under this chapter for a period of two years after such applicant's
1071 registration has expired or been revoked; provided, however, that such deposits shall not
1072 be released at any time while there is pending against the applicant an action (including any
1073 direct appeal of such action, ~~or an appeal based on a petition for certiorari jurisdiction, or~~
1074 a petition for review), of which the Secretary of State has notice, in a court of competent
1075 jurisdiction in which it is alleged that the applicant is liable for damages under this chapter.
1076 Such deposits shall not be released except upon application to and the written order of the

Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall have no liability for any such release of any deposit or part thereof made by him or her in good faith. The Secretary of State may designate any regularly constituted state depository having trust powers domiciled in this state as a depository to receive and hold any such deposit. Any such deposit so held shall be at the expense of the applicant. Such depository shall give to the Secretary of State a proper trust and safekeeping receipt upon which the Secretary of State shall give an official receipt to the applicant. The State of Georgia shall be responsible for the safekeeping and return of all deposits made pursuant to this Code section. So long as the applicant complies with this chapter, the applicant may demand, receive, bring an action for, and recover the income from the securities deposited or may exchange and substitute for the letter of credit or securities deposited or a part thereof, with the approval of the Secretary of State, a letter of credit or securities of the kinds specified in subsection (b) of this Code section of equivalent or greater value. No judgment creditor or other claimant of the applicant shall levy upon any deposit held pursuant to this Code section or upon any part thereof, except as specified in this subsection. Whenever any person shall file an action in a court of competent jurisdiction in which it is alleged that the applicant is liable for damages under this chapter, such person, in order to secure his or her recovery, may give notice to the Secretary of State of such alleged liability and of the amount of damages claimed, after which notice the Secretary of State shall be bound to retain, subject to the order of the Superior Court of Fulton County, as provided in subsection (d) of this Code section, a sufficient amount of the deposit to pay the judgment in the action.

(d) In the event that the applicant prevails in such action and in the event that such deposits have been held by the Secretary of State for a period of at least two years after the applicant's registration has expired or been revoked, then such deposits shall be released to the applicant; provided, however, that such deposits shall not be released at any time while there is pending against the applicant an action (including any direct appeal of such action, ~~or an appeal based on a petition for certiorari jurisdiction,~~ or a petition for review),

1104 of which the Secretary of State has notice, in a court of competent jurisdiction in which it
1105 is alleged that the applicant is liable for damages under this chapter. If a judgment is
1106 rendered in such action by which it is determined that the applicant is liable for damages
1107 under this chapter and the applicant has not paid the judgment within ten days of the date
1108 the judgment became final or if the applicant petitions the Supreme Court of the United
1109 States to take certiorari jurisdiction over such action and the applicant has not paid the
1110 judgment within ten days of the date the Supreme Court of the United States denies
1111 certiorari jurisdiction or within ten days of the date the Supreme Court of the United States
1112 affirms the judgment, then such person may petition the Superior Court of Fulton County
1113 for an order directing the Secretary of State to reduce such deposit or a portion thereof
1114 sufficient to pay the judgment to cash or its equivalent and to pay such judgment to the
1115 extent the judgment may be satisfied with the proceeds of the deposit. If there shall remain
1116 any residue from the deposit and if at least two years have passed since the expiration or
1117 revocation of the applicant's registration, the Secretary of State shall pay such residue to
1118 the applicant, taking his receipt for the residue, which shall be filed and recorded with the
1119 other papers of the case, unless there is pending against the applicant an action (including
1120 any direct appeal of such action, ~~or~~ an appeal based on a petition for certiorari jurisdiction,
1121 or a petition for review), of which the Secretary of State has notice, in a court of competent
1122 jurisdiction in which it is alleged that the applicant is liable for damages under this chapter,
1123 in which case the Secretary of State shall hold or dispose of such residue in accordance
1124 with the provisions of this subsection relating to the holding or disposing of the entire
1125 deposit. If more than one final judgment is rendered against the applicant for violation of
1126 this chapter, the judgment creditors shall be paid in full from such deposit or residue
1127 thereof, to the extent the deposit or residue is sufficient to pay the judgments, in the order
1128 in which the judgment creditors petitioned the Superior Court of Fulton County."

SECTION 2-34.

Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 43-17-17, relating to appeals, as follows:

"43-17-17.

(a) An appeal may be taken from any order of the Secretary of State resulting from a hearing held in accordance with Code Section 43-17-16 by any person adversely affected thereby to the Superior Court of Fulton County by serving the Secretary of State, within 20 days after the date of entry of such order, a written notice of appeal, copy of the petition for review filed in the Superior Court of Fulton County and signed by the appellant petitioner, stating:

(1) The order from which the appeal is taken;

(2) The ground upon which a reversal or modification of the order is sought; and

(3) A demand for a certified transcript of the record of the order.

(b) Upon receipt of the notice of appeal petition for review, the Secretary of State shall, within ten days thereafter, make, certify, and deliver to the appellant Superior Court of Fulton County a transcript of the record of the order from which the appeal is taken, provided that the appellant shall pay the reasonable costs of such transcript. ~~The appellant, within five days after receipt of the transcript, shall file such transcript and a copy of the notice of appeal with the clerk of the court.~~ The notice of appeal petition for review and transcript of the record shall constitute appellant's complaint. The complaint shall thereupon be entered on the trial calendar of the court.

(c) If the order of the Secretary of State shall be reversed, the reviewing court shall by its mandate specifically direct the Secretary of State as to ~~his~~ any further action to be taken by the Secretary of State in the matter, including the making and entering of an order or orders in connection therewith and the conditions, limitations, or restrictions to be therein contained."

SECTION 2-35.

Article 3 of Chapter 7 or Title 44 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to landlord and tenant dispossessory proceedings, is amended by revising Code Section 44-7-56, relating to appeal and possession and payment of rent pending appeal, as follows:

"44-7-56.

(a) Any judgment by the trial court shall be appealable pursuant to Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7 of Title 5, ~~provided that any such appeal shall be filed within seven days of the date such judgment was entered and provided, further, that, after,~~

(b) An appeal made pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section shall proceed as follows:

(1) A copy of the petition for review filed in the reviewing superior or state court or the notice of appeal is shall be filed with the clerk of the trial court within seven days after the date the judgment was entered in the trial court;~~the~~

(2) The clerk shall immediately notify the trial judge of the petition for review or notice of appeal, and the trial judge may, within 15 days after the same is filed in the trial court, supplement the record with findings of fact and conclusions of law which will be considered as a part of the order of the judge in that case;

(3) If the judgment of the trial court is against the tenant and the tenant appeals this judgment, the tenant shall ~~be required to~~ notify the trial court of his or her appeal and pay into the registry of the reviewing superior or state court all sums found by the trial court to be due for rent in order to remain in possession of the premises; and

(4) The tenant shall ~~also be required to~~ pay all future rent as it becomes due into the registry of the ~~trial~~ reviewing superior or state court pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section 44-7-54 until the issue has been finally determined on appeal."

SECTION 2-36.

Code Section 44-7-115 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to foreclosure of liens on abandoned or intact mobile homes, is amended by revising paragraph (8) as follows:

"(8) Any order issued by the magistrate court shall be appealable pursuant to ~~Article 2~~ of Chapter 3 of Title 5, provided that any such appeal shall be filed within seven days of after the date such order was entered and provided, further, that, after the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review is filed with the clerk of the ~~trial~~ reviewing superior or state court, the clerk of such court shall immediately notify the magistrate court of the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review. If the order of the magistrate court is against the responsible party and the responsible party appeals such order, the responsible party shall be required to pay into the registry of the reviewing superior or state court all sums found by the magistrate court to be due in order to remain in possession of the mobile home. The responsible party shall also be required to pay all future rent into the registry of the reviewing superior or state court as it becomes due in such amounts specified in paragraph (2) of this Code section until the issue has been finally determined on appeal."

SECTION 2-37.

Code Section 47-14-51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to payments to the Superior Court Clerks' Retirement Fund of Georgia from fees collected in certain civil actions and for recording of instruments pertaining to real estate, records, audit of records, use of sums remitted, and failure of clerk to remit, is amended by revising subsections (a) and (e) as follows:

"(a) In addition to all other legal costs, the sum of \$1.00 shall be charged and collected in each civil suit, action, case, or proceeding filed in the superior courts or in any other court of this state in which a clerk eligible for membership in this retirement fund is clerk, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, all adoptions, charters, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, applications by a personal representative for leave to sell or reinvest,

1207 trade name registrations, applications for change of name, and all other proceedings of a
1208 civil nature, filed in the superior courts or other such courts."

1209 "(e) The sum of \$1.00 shall be paid out of the fees charged and collected pursuant to
1210 Title 15 in each civil suit, action, case, or proceeding filed in the superior courts or in any
1211 other court of this state in which a clerk eligible for membership in this retirement fund is
1212 clerk and shall be remitted to the board as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section.
1213 Such fees shall include, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, all adoptions,
1214 charters, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, applications by a personal representative for leave
1215 to sell or reinvest, trade name registrations, applications for change of name, and all other
1216 proceedings of a civil nature filed in the superior courts or other such courts."

1217 **SECTION 2-38.**

1218 Code Section 47-16-61 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to payments to
1219 the Sheriffs' Retirement Fund of Georgia from fees collected in civil actions, duty to record
1220 and remit sums collected, and penalties on delinquent amounts, is amended by revising
1221 subsections (a) and (b) as follows:

1222 "(a) In addition to all other legal costs, the sum of \$1.00 shall be charged and collected in
1223 each civil action, case, or proceeding, including, without limiting the generality of the
1224 foregoing, all adoptions, charters, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, applications by personal
1225 representative for leave to sell or invest, trade name registrations, applications for change
1226 of name, and all other proceedings of a civil nature filed in the superior courts. The clerks
1227 of the superior courts shall collect such fees, and the fees so collected shall be remitted to
1228 the board quarterly or at such other time as the board may provide. It shall be the duty of
1229 the clerks of the superior courts to keep accurate records of the amounts due the board
1230 under this subsection, and such records may be audited by the board at any time. The sums
1231 remitted to the board under this subsection shall be used only for the purposes provided for
1232 in this chapter.

(b) In addition to all other legal costs, the sum of \$1.00 shall be charged and collected in each civil action, case, or proceeding, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, all adoptions, charters, ~~certiorari~~ petitions for review, applications by personal representative for leave to sell or invest, trade name registrations, applications for change of name, and all other proceedings of a civil nature filed in the state courts and magistrate courts of this state in which the sheriff of the superior court also fulfills the function as sheriff of such inferior court. The clerks of such state courts and magistrate courts shall collect such fees, and the fees so collected shall be remitted to the board quarterly or at such other time as the board may provide. It shall be the duty of the clerks of such state courts and magistrate courts to keep accurate records of the amounts due the board under this subsection, and such records may be audited by the board at any time. The sums remitted to the board under this subsection shall be used only for the purposes provided for in this chapter."

SECTION 2-39.

Code Section 48-5-311 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to creation of county boards of equalization, duties, review of assessments, and appeals, is amended by revising paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of subsection (g) as follows:

"(2) An appeal by the taxpayer as provided in paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be effected by emailing, if the county board of tax assessors has adopted a written policy consenting to electronic service, or by mailing to or filing with the county board of tax assessors a written ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review. An appeal by the county board of tax assessors shall be effected by giving ~~notice~~ a petition for review to the taxpayer. The ~~notice~~ petition for review given to the taxpayer shall be dated and shall contain the name and the last known address of the taxpayer. The ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review shall specifically state the grounds for appeal. The ~~notice~~ petition for review shall be mailed or filed within 30 days from the date on which the decision of the county board

1259 of equalization, hearing officer, or arbitrator is delivered pursuant to
1260 subparagraph (e)(6)(D), paragraph (7) of subsection (e.1), or division (f)(3)(C)(ix) of this
1261 Code section. Within 45 days of receipt of a taxpayer's ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for
1262 review and before ~~certification of the appeal to the~~ the petition for review is filed in
1263 superior court, the county board of tax assessors shall send to the taxpayer notice that a
1264 settlement conference, in which the county board of tax assessors and the taxpayer shall
1265 confer in good faith, will be held at a specified date and time which shall be no later than
1266 30 days from the notice of the settlement conference, and notice of the amount of the
1267 filing fee for a petition for review, if any, required by the clerk of the superior court. A
1268 taxpayer may appear for the settlement conference in person, by his or her authorized
1269 agent or representative, or both. The county board of tax assessors, in their discretion and
1270 with the consent of the taxpayer, may alternatively conduct the settlement conference by
1271 audio or video teleconference or any other remote communication medium. The taxpayer
1272 may exercise a one-time option to reschedule the settlement conference to a different date
1273 and time acceptable to the taxpayer during normal business hours. After a settlement
1274 conference has convened, the parties may agree to continue the settlement conference to
1275 a later date. If at the end of the 45 day review period the county board of tax assessors
1276 elects not to hold a settlement conference, then the appeal shall terminate and the
1277 taxpayer's stated value shall be entered in the records of the board of tax assessors as the
1278 fair market value for the year under appeal and the provisions of subsection (c) of Code
1279 Section 48-5-299 shall apply to such value. If the taxpayer chooses not to participate in
1280 the settlement conference, he or she may not seek and shall not be awarded fees and costs
1281 at such time when the ~~appeal is settled~~ petition for review is reviewed in superior court.
1282 If at the conclusion of the settlement conference the parties reach an agreement, the
1283 settlement value shall be entered in the records of the county board of tax assessors as the
1284 fair market value for the tax year under appeal and the provisions of subsection (c) of
1285 Code Section 48-5-299 shall apply to such value. If at the conclusion of the settlement

conference the parties cannot reach an agreement, then written notice shall be provided to the taxpayer that the filing fees for the superior court must be paid by the taxpayer by submitting to the county board of tax assessors a check, money order, or any other instrument payable to the clerk of the superior court within 20 days of the date of the conference, ~~with a copy of the check delivered to the county board of tax assessors.~~ Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the amount of the filing fee for an appeal under this subsection shall be \$25.00. An appeal under this subsection shall not be subject to any other fees or additional costs otherwise required under any provision of Title 15 or under any other provision of law. ~~Immediately following payment of such \$25.00 filing fee by the taxpayer to the clerk of the superior court, the clerk shall remit the proceeds thereof to the governing authority of the county which shall deposit the proceeds into the general fund of the county.~~ Within 30 days of receipt of proof of payment the taxpayer's payment made out to the clerk of the superior court, or, in the case of a petition for review filed by the county board of tax assessors, within 30 days of giving notice of the petition for review to the taxpayer, the county board of tax assessors shall ~~certify to~~ file with the clerk of the superior court the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review and any other papers specified by the person appealing, including, but not limited to, the staff information from the file used by the county board of tax assessors, the county board of equalization, the hearing officer, or the arbitrator. Immediately following payment of such \$25.00 filing fee to the clerk of the superior court, the clerk shall remit the proceeds thereof to the governing authority of the county which shall deposit the proceeds into the general fund of the county. All papers and information ~~certified to~~ filed with the clerk shall become a part of the record on appeal to the superior court. At the time of ~~certification~~ the filing of the appeal petition for review, the county board of tax assessors shall serve the taxpayer and his or her attorney of record, if any, with a copy of the ~~notice of appeal~~ petition for review filed in the superior court and with the civil action file number assigned to the appeal. Such service shall be effected in

1313 accordance with subsection (b) of Code Section 9-11-5. No discovery, motions, or other
1314 pleadings may be filed by the county board of tax assessors in the appeal until such
1315 service has been made.

1316 (3) The appeal shall constitute a de novo action. The board of tax assessors shall have
1317 the burden of proving its opinions of value and the validity of its proposed assessment by
1318 a preponderance of evidence. Upon a failure of the board of tax assessors to meet such
1319 burden of proof, the court ~~may, upon motion or sua sponte, authorize the finding~~ shall
1320 find that the value asserted by the board of tax assessors is ~~unreasonable~~ incorrect and
1321 authorize the determination of the final value of the property.

1322 (4)(A) The appeal shall be placed on the court's next available jury or bench trial
1323 calendar, at the taxpayer's election, following the filing of the appeal unless continued
1324 by the court. If only questions of law are presented in the appeal, the appeal shall be
1325 heard as soon as practicable before the court sitting without a jury. Each hearing before
1326 the court sitting without a jury at the taxpayer's election shall be held within 30 days
1327 following the date on which the appeal is filed with the clerk of the superior court
1328 unless continued by the court for a period not to exceed 90 days.

1329 (B)(i) The county board of tax assessors shall use the valuation of the county board
1330 of equalization, the hearing officer, or the arbitrator, as applicable, in compiling the
1331 tax digest for the county.

1332 (ii)(I) If the final determination of value on appeal is less than the valuation thus
1333 used, the tax commissioner shall be authorized to adjust the taxpayer's tax bill to
1334 reflect the final value for the year in question.

1335 (II) If the final determination of value on appeal causes a reduction in taxes and
1336 creates a refund that is owed to the taxpayer, it shall be paid by the tax
1337 commissioner to the taxpayer, entity, or transferee who paid the taxes with interest,
1338 as provided in subsection (m) of this Code section.

(III) If the taxpayer appeals to the superior court pursuant to this subsection and the final determination of value on appeal is 85 percent or less of the valuation set by the county board of equalization, hearing officer, or arbitrator as to any real property, the taxpayer, in addition to the interest provided for in subsection (m) of this Code section, shall recover costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the action. Any appeal of an award of attorney's fees by the county shall be specifically approved by the governing authority of the county.

(IV) If the board of assessors appeals to the superior court pursuant to this subsection and the final determination of value on appeal is 85 percent or less of the valuation set by the board of assessors as to any real property, the taxpayer, in addition to the interest provided for in subsection (m) of this Code section, shall recover costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the action. Any appeal of an award of attorney's fees by the county shall be specifically approved by the governing authority of the county.

(iii) If the final determination of value on appeal is greater than the valuation set by the county board of equalization, hearing officer, or arbitrator, as applicable, causes an increase in taxes, and creates an additional billing, it shall be paid to the tax commissioner as any other tax due along with interest, as provided in subsection (m) of this Code section."

PART III.

SECTION 3-1.

This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2023, and shall apply to petitions for review filed in superior or state court on or after such date.

1362

SECTION 3-2.

1363 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.