



NORTH CAROLINA INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

August 2021 Quarterly Update

Full Commission Section and General/ Administrative Updates

- Governor Roy Cooper appointed Wanda Blanche Taylor to serve as a Commissioner, and she was confirmed by the General Assembly on May 20, 2021. Before serving on the Full Commission, Taylor was the Director of Litigation/Counsel at Key Risk Insurance. Prior to that, she served as a Deputy Commissioner at the Industrial Commission for twenty years, including as Chief Deputy Commissioner. She has also represented both employees and employers/insurers in private practice. Taylor received her law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law and her undergraduate degree from Duke University.
- Governor Roy Cooper appointed Adrian A. Phillips to serve as a Commissioner, and she was confirmed by the General Assembly on June 2, 2021. Prior to her appointment to the Full Commission, Phillips served as a Deputy Commissioner beginning in 2002. Before joining the Commission, she worked as an Assistant Attorney General at the North Carolina Department of Justice where she was assigned to the Industrial Commission as Agency Counsel and Fraud Prosecutor for the Commission's Fraud Investigation Section. Previously, Phillips prosecuted Medicaid fraud cases for the North Carolina Department of Justice and served as an Assistant District Attorney in former prosecutorial District 9A (Caswell and Person Counties). Phillips received her law degree from the North Carolina Central University School of Law and her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Bennett College.
- Permanent rule 11 NCAC 23E .302, which allows the Commission to waive or modify its rules to bring them in conformity with an emergency order or directive of the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, was approved by the Rules Review Commission at their July 2021 meeting and went into effect August 1, 2021.

Deputy Commissioner Section

- Jessica N. Holmes has been appointed to serve a six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner assigned to the Commission's Raleigh office. Having worked as a solo practitioner and as counsel to various organizations, Holmes brings a diverse legal background to the Commission, with experience in the areas of labor and employment law. Holmes previously served two terms on the Wake County Board of Commissioners as a County Commissioner At-Large, and she was elected twice to lead the Board as Chair. As a Commissioner, Holmes also served on the Board of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. Holmes earned her law and bachelor's degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 2018, she received the Distinguished Young Alumni Award from the UNC General Alumni Association, and in 2019, she received the Outstanding Recent Graduate Award from the UNC Law Alumni Association.
- Samuel A. Scudder has been appointed to serve a six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner assigned to the Commission's Raleigh office but hearing noninsured cases throughout the State. Scudder brings extensive relevant experience to the Commission, having represented individuals in North Carolina for over 30 years in the areas of workers' compensation and personal injury. He is a North Carolina State Bar Board Certified Specialist in workers' compensation law and a North Carolina Certified Mediator. Prior to practicing law, Scudder worked as a pharmacist in Wake County. He earned his law degree from Campbell University School of Law.
- Robert J. Harris has been reappointed to serve a second six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner, and he will continue to serve as Senior Deputy Commissioner in the Commission's Raleigh office. Harris joined the Commission in 2003, first serving as a Special Deputy Commissioner and then as a Deputy Commissioner. Prior to working at the Commission, Harris was in private practice, concentrating in employment law. He also worked as a newspaper reporter. Harris received his law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law and his undergraduate degree from Yale University.
- Lori A. Gaines has been reappointed to serve a second six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner, and she will continue her service in the Commission's Wilmington regional office. Prior to joining the Commission in 2015 as a Deputy Commissioner, Gaines had over 15 years of legal experience in workers' compensation, criminal defense, and family law matters. She earned her law degree from the Campbell University School of Law and her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

- Jesse M. “Jay” Tillman has been reappointed to serve a second six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner, and he will continue his service in the Commission’s Charlotte regional office. Prior to joining the Commission in 2015 as a Deputy Commissioner, Tillman practiced law in the areas of personal injury, products liability, and real property liability. He earned his law degree from the Campbell University School of Law and his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Claims Administration Section

- Mike Mackay has joined the Commission as the Director of Claims Administration. Mackay is a North Carolina State Bar Board Certified Specialist in workers’ compensation law and brings significant private sector management experience to the Commission. As the managing attorney of the workers’ compensation department at the Law Offices of James Scott Farrin, Mackay led a team of attorneys and other employees for nearly twenty years. Prior to that, he represented defendants in workers’ compensation and personal injury cases at the law firm of Cranfill Sumner. Before law school, Mackay worked as a reporter for the Winston-Salem Journal. He earned his law degree and his bachelor’s degree in Journalism and Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Employee Classification Section

- Catherine Ittermann has been appointed as the Director of the Commission’s Employee Classification Section. Ittermann brings significant relevant experience to the position, having joined the Commission’s Fraud Division (now encompassed in the Criminal Investigations & Employee Classification Division) in 2013 and having worked both as an Investigative Assistant and an Investigative Specialist for the Commission. In her Investigative Specialist role, which Ittermann performed up until her appointment as Director of the Employee Classification Section, she helped investigate reports of employee misclassification under the Employee Fair Classification Act and helped the Commission coordinate with all relevant State agencies as mandated by the Act. Ittermann also has worked with the Employee Classification Task Force to develop and enhance the Employee Classification Application.