

# Crime victims may be able to claim state compensation

By **THAD OGBURN**  
Staff Writer

People who are robbed, assaulted or injured in a violent crime after July 1, 1984, may receive money from the state thanks to a new victim's compensation program.

"Everybody has started seeing that we have to do something for crime victims," said Jim Scarcella, director of the Victim and Justice Services Division of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

Scarcella said he and his staff hope to begin basic planning for the victim's compensation commission in October. If things go as planned, the commission will be in operation on July 1, 1984.

The commission will pay up to \$20,000 to victims of robbery or violent crime who meet the requirements for compensation. Families of murder victims can also claim up to \$2,000 for burial expenses if they meet certain qualifications. The requirements and rules concerning compensation have not been fully decided.

North Carolina already has a rape assistance program that provides medical assistance of up to \$500 to rape victims. The program, which has been operating for three years, was the first form of victim's compensation in North Carolina.

Planners have estimated that the victim's compensation program will cost \$1 million, Scarcella said. The program will be financed by a state appropriation, which has yet to be approved.

"There has been a bill establishing the victim's compensation program, but we don't have any money for it right now," Scarcella said.

Currently, there are 38 states which have some form of victim's compensation. Each state has its own program guidelines.

"In some states there is not enough public information about the victim-oriented programs. We want to plan well and ensure that we have enough information," Scarcella said. "We also don't want victims to have to wait an eternity for compensation, like they do in some states."

Oklahoma has a highly successful victim's compensation program. Since its inception in October 1981, the program has given \$341,406 to people who have received bodily injury or have experienced a

relative's death as a result of a crime.

"The beauty of our program is that it doesn't affect tax payers," said Susan Damron, an administrative assistant at the Oklahoma Crime Victim's Compensation Board. "The criminals are actually providing funding for the victims."

Anyone who commits a misdemeanor in Oklahoma, excluding traffic violations, must pay \$5 to the compensation board. A person convicted of a non-violent felony must pay \$20, and someone convicted of a violent felony must pay between \$25 and \$10,000. The victim's compensation fine is administered separately from any other fines or sentences.

# Wrongdoing no stranger to N.C. politics

By **KYLE MARSHALL**  
Staff Writer

One would think it could only happen in an urbanized, Northeastern state.

Charges of vote-buying and election irregularities making headlines. High officials in state government indicted on various charges. Reports of judges, sheriffs and bureaucrats involved in questionable practices.

It doesn't sound like it could happen in North Carolina, where there has long been a reputation for good government. But for the past year there have been enough allegations of public corruption in North Carolina to make outsiders as well as N.C. political experts question the state's good reputation.

Consider the following:

- Since the Federal Bureau of Investigation's undercover operation in South-eastern North Carolina — code-named ColCor for Columbus County corruption — became public in July 1982, about 40 people have been indicted. Not only have there been indictments, 29 government officials and citizens have been convicted or have pleaded guilty.
- Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green was indicted June 21 by a Wake County grand jury on four counts of bribery and one count of conspiracy to commit bribery. He now awaits trial.
- In Clay and Alexander counties, possible election fraud has led to more than a dozen indictments and, so far, five convictions or guilty pleas.
- Another FBI probe resulted in 11 indictments against Robeson County officials and residents connected with that county's CETA program. The indictments came in late July, and the defendants await trial.
- The N.C. Judicial Standards Commission has recommended that N.C. Superior Court Judge Charles Kivett of Greensboro be removed from office because of misconduct. Based on evidence presented at a commission hearing, Kivett has been accused of having sexual relations with a juror and with the mother of a defendant.

Political analysts agree publicity on N.C. public corruption is at an all-time high. But simply because there's more known about it does not mean more corruption is taking place.

Take the recent case of state Sen. R.C. Soles, D-Columbus. He was indicted on federal extortion charges, but was found innocent Aug. 9. The results of the Soles case, however, has been the exception rather than the rule, as prosecutors have been successful in getting guilty pleas or verdicts.

"I don't know if there's more corruption in the state than there has been over the past 10 to 20 years," John Sanders said, director of the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill. "Certainly, the number of prosecutions has risen. But there's no single explanation as to why we're hearing more about political wrongdoing."

UNC political science professor Thad Beyle agrees that a simple explanation can't be found. Beyle, also the chairman for the Center for Public Policies Research, a Raleigh-based government-study group, said what's happening in North Carolina can be partially attributed to current changes the state is going through — from an agricultural state to a more urban one.

Beyle said he also thinks the media may have an influence. "We're hearing more about corruption than we've ever heard before," Beyle said. "It seems that more questionable or illegal practices are going on and that more people are being caught. It could be that the press is more vigilant."

Another popular theory among government officials, however, is that prosecutors and investigators are more active in their efforts to root out corruption. So active, in fact, that the FBI and federal prosecutors have been accused of being overzealous because of political pressures.

U.S. attorneys are appointed by the Justice Department. Since the department is part of a Republican administration, N.C. Democrats are a little uneasy about Republican prosecutors operating in a heavily Democratic state.

"There's some evidence that at certain levels in both state and local levels of government in North Carolina officials may feel that the FBI and prosecutors are overzealous," Beyle said. "That's certainly true in light of the Soles trial, where he was found innocent."

The charge has been repeated frequently across the state. U.S. Attorney Charles Brewer, who serves the Western District of North Carolina, acknowledges that Democrats may think party politics has an influence. But Brewer does not agree with the charge.

"The thing is, 99 percent of the public officeholders in North Carolina are Democrats," Brewer said. "People say that federal prosecutors are only going after Democrats, and the people who have been indicted are Democrats."

"Actually, we're prosecuting everyone we think is involved in corrupt politics, no matter what party. It's just that there are so many Democrats in the state."

There's only one object in mind when Brewer prosecutes in cases of vote fraud, as in Clay and Alexander counties — clean elections. "That's the reason DAs are prosecuting and courts are convicting. We're wanting to create clean elections."

Those who follow politics in North Carolina also are wanting to see if the state's reputation for clean government will be permanently damaged.

"I don't think we're losing that reputation," Beyle said. "After all, corruption happens in every state."

# Lobbyists spent more than \$800,000 on 1983 General Assembly

The Associated Press

**RALEIGH** — Lobbyists spent at least \$818,565 to influence lawmakers during the 1983 General Assembly, according to expense reports filed by the Aug. 22 reporting deadline.

But those reports reflect only a fraction of the cost of lobbying because most of the 513 registered lobbyists did not include their salaries in their reports.

One of the most active lobbies in 1983 was the alcoholic beverage industry, which hired 16 lobbyists and spent at least

\$39,000 to influence legislation.

The major act of the session was Gov. Jim Hunt's Safe Roads Act, which raised the drinking age for beer and wine from 18 to 19 effective Oct. 1. Beer and wine companies tried to block the increase.

The North Carolina Beer Wholesalers Association spent \$8,715 for a legislative reception at a Raleigh hotel. It included entertainment by the Little German Band and more than \$200 worth of beer and \$97 worth of wine.

The Miller Brewing Co. hosted a dinner for the legislators at a cost of \$2,539.

Meanwhile, Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co. wanted lawmakers to adopt a bill requiring cars and light trucks to have front and rear reflectorized license tags.

The measure would have raised the cost of tags from \$16 to \$20. The company would have profited from the law because it had won all contracts for reflectorized license plates in other states in recent years.

The company hired former U.S. Sen. Robert B. Morgan, D-N.C., and a Raleigh law firm to lobby for it. And lobbyist Richard W. Brown of St. Paul, Minn.,

reported spending \$1,016 entertaining lawmakers from May through July.

The 18 lobbyists for the financial industry reported spending at least \$27,911. The industry achieved several goals, including a law allowing banks to charge credit card holders up to \$20 a year.

The 20 lobbyists for utilities reported spending at least \$68,717, although few major issues directly affecting their industries were considered.

The auto industry's 13 lobbyists reported spending at least \$23,852. Among their goals was a law to protect the territories of

franchised dealers, which was passed.

The four trucking lobbyists and six railroad lobbyists together spent at least \$21,355 on opposite sides of legislation to increase the legal weight limit for trucks.

Among the lobbyists in the Legislature were 24 former lawmakers, according to records filed in the N.C. Secretary of State's office.

The former legislators were able to use their contacts and their knowledge of how the General Assembly works to represent 89 clients.

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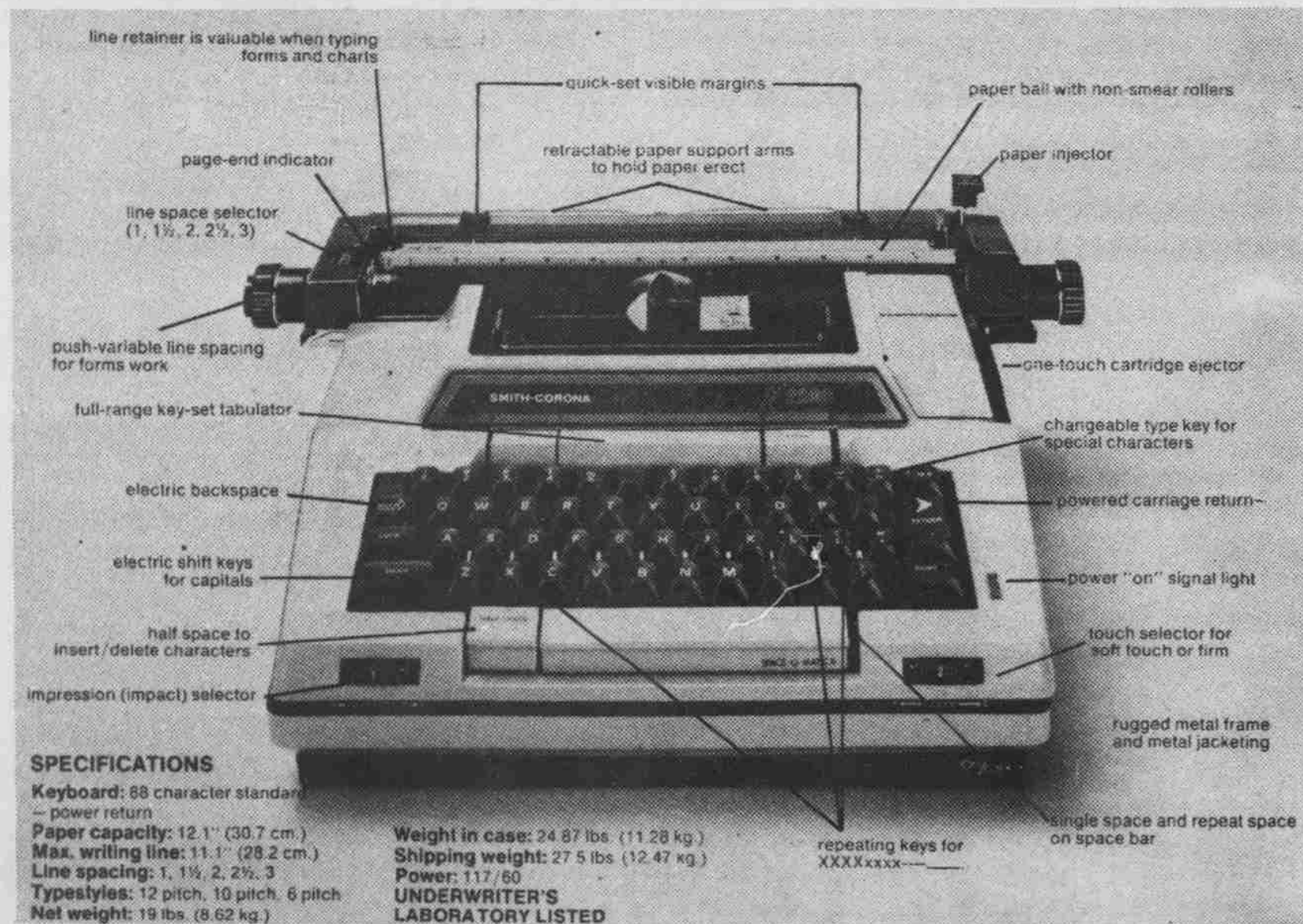
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