



KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COURT SERVICES OFFICERS

House Appropriations Committee
Representative Ron Ryckman, Jr., Chairman

Friday March 11, 2016

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Testimony in Opposition to HB 2725

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2725. I am Tom Weishaar, Kansas Association of Court Services Officers (KACSO) Legislative Committee member. KACSO is concerned that this bill would result in losing our long-term knowledgeable employees including those who train newer employees and that if this bill is passed it could place communities at a higher risk because of fewer court services officers in the system.

Points of Opposition for CSOs:

This bill is an incentive to state employees hired before July 1, 1993, who are qualified to retire to do so. The system cannot absorb the numbers leaving in a short amount of time. The group of people that I have the privilege to serve beside are not abusers of the retirement system. We do not make huge salaries. We keep the public safe every day by supervising and holding accountable those convicted and placed on probation. I personally am watching the progress of this bill because, while I enjoy the work I do immensely, losing the retirement that I've worked so hard to earn is not an option.

The mission of the Kansas Association of Court Services Officers is to challenge, educate, support and advocate for the membership by promoting fellowship and professionalism, providing relevant training opportunities and maintaining communication with all members. The organization will further this mission by encouraging collaboration with our Court Services Officers and professional organizations and by recognizing member excellence.

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The bill would affect retention of long term employees. Losing those employees would be disastrous to offender supervision in the community. With fewer seasoned, experienced court services officers in the community and fewer court services officers from whom new officers learn, public safety is compromised.

We currently have difficulty competing in pay with municipalities, community corrections and state agencies. It will not help in trying to encourage people to come work as a court services officer when there is little benefit in the retirement package.

We note that police and fire is exempted from the provisions of this bill. We believe that all KPERS-eligible groups should be treated similarly. Our employees are just as much a partner in public safety as the group exempted.

KACSO thanks the committee for allowing us to provide testimony on HB 2725 and respectfully requests that the committee not pass this bill. I am happy to answer your questions.

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