

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hon. Jeff King, Chairman
Hon. Greg Smith, Vice Chairman
Hon. David Haley, R.M. Member

January 28, 2015
10:30 am
Room 346-S

Chief Judge Daniel D. Creitz
Thirty-First Judicial District
1 N. Washington
Iola, KS 66749
dancreizt@acdc.kscoxmail.com

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 51

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and this honorable committee for extending the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 51. Due to my court schedule I cannot appear in person, but the KDJA is represented today by Chief Judge James Fleetwood and Chief Judge Merlin Wheeler. Both are available to testify. I am Daniel D. Creitz, Chief Judge of the Thirty-First Judicial District and a member of the Executive Board of the Kansas District Judges Association (KDJA) serving as the KDJA Legislative Co-Chair with Judge James Fleetwood, Chief Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial District. Judge Merlin Wheeler, Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial District, is also a member of the KDJA Executive Board. The KDJA strongly supports passage of SB 51.

SB 51 relates to court fees costs and the judicial branch surcharge fee.

Under current law court fees and costs, and the judicial branch surcharge fee sunset July 1, 2015. SB 51 would extend this sunset 2 years for all these funds through July 1, 2017. These court fees and costs along with the surcharge fund have been utilized by the legislature to help fund the judicial branch. In FY 2014 the total of these funds was about \$17 million with about \$9 million being surcharge fees. Although the KDJA maintains that funding through the state general fund is necessary and essential for the long-term stability of the judicial branch budget,

the reality is that these funds are being utilized to help fund the judiciary. As a result SB 51 is essential.

The KDJA urges passage of SB 51 since it contains essential funding for operations of the Kansas judicial branch.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the KDJA.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Dale Creitz
Chief Judge, Thirty-First Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board Member and Legislative Co-Chair

James Fleetwood
Chief Judge, Eighteenth Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board Member and Legislative Co-Chair

Merlin Wheeler
Chief Judge, Fifth Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board and Legislative Committee Member