

City of Shawnee
11110 Johnson Drive
Shawnee, Kansas 66203
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cityofshawnee.org

January 22, 2024

Re: Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Proponent to SB318

Chair Warren and Committee Members,

My name is Karen Torline, and I appreciate the opportunity to address proposed SB318 with this committee. I am a municipal judge in several municipalities in the Johnson County area. I am a past President of the Kansas Municipal Judges Association (KMJA), served several years on the executive committee and am currently the Chair of the Legislative Committee of that organization.

The goal of the KMJA Legislative Committee is to propose legislative changes that would have a positive impact on court staff, as well as on the defendants appearing in our courts. SB318 is one such bill. The fingerprinting requirement set forth in K.S.A. 12-4517 requires the fingerprints be taken from defendants when convicted of offenses that are the equivalent of class A and B misdemeanors, as well as the class C offense of assault. The taking of prints requires the time and resources of police officers, bailiffs or court clerks, rightfully so in many instances. But a large number of defendants in municipal courts across the state are charged with either operating a vehicle without a driver's license or driving without insurance, both of which meet the definition of equivalent of class A or B misdemeanor. By removing those two nonviolent offenses from the requirement of fingerprints, it would free court staff to use time and resources more efficiently. Because these two charges require fingerprints upon conviction, most courts take those prints during the court docket, which pulls the person responsible for printing (law enforcement officers, bailiffs or court clerks) away from the court which extends the amount of time defendants are waiting in court. It can also remove bailiffs from the courtroom, which can be a safety concern. In addition, a charge of no proof of insurance is most often related to a lack of financial resources. Therefore, the KMJA legislative committee supports the adoption of this bill.

I agree with Mr. Klumpp's comments with regard to expired tags in violation of K.S.A.8-142. I believe this section was included in SB318 because it was unclear whether prints were required for this offense. If it is determined that prints are not currently required for this offense, the KMJA legislative committee agrees that this reference should be removed from SB318.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Torline
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Shawnee, Kansas

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