



**KANSAS BAR
ASSOCIATION**

TO: **The Honorable Tim Owens, Chair**
 And Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Joseph N. Molina**
 On behalf of the Kansas Bar Association

RE: **SB 322 – Extending the judicial branch surcharge fee**

DATE: **February 15, 2012**

Good morning Chairman Owens and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I am Joseph N. Molina and on behalf of the Kansas Bar Association I provide this written testimony in support of SB 322 which would extend the current judicial branch surcharge fee till June 30, 2013.

The KBA is acutely aware of the inadequate funding of most governmental agencies and institutions, and it is especially conscious of the continuing struggles facing the Judicial Branch. An adequately funded court system ensures a citizen's right to meaningful access to the courts. A properly funded judicial system also allows for the efficient application of the legal process for lawyers and litigants. If the surcharge fee is allowed to sunset on June 30, 2012, the judicial branch could suffer a significant financial hardship and in turn subject Kansans to an inefficient court system.

The KBA recognizes and appreciates the steps taken by our Judicial Branch to deal with their fiscal situation. The Judicial branch continues to show sound fiscal discipline by continuing measures designed to weather difficult financial times. The Judicial Branch continues with a hiring freeze from last year, reducing travel and instituted other efficiencies throughout the court system. The additional money generated from last year's surcharge fee increase is one of the steps used by the Judicial Branch. However, to maintain the level of stability created from past budget saving measures the surcharge fee needs to be maintained.

On behalf of the Kansas Bar Association, I thank you for your time this morning and would be available to respond to questions.

About the Kansas Bar Association:

The Kansas Bar Association (KBA) was founded in 1882 as a voluntary association for dedicated legal professionals and has more than 7,200 members, including lawyers, judges, law students, and paralegals. www.ksbar.org