

Kansas Court Reporters Association

Chairman Owens
Judiciary Committee
Kansas House of Representative

Re: House Bill 2484, reinstatement of certification
for freelance (deposition) court reporters

Representative Owens and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas Court Reporters Association, I would like to address you on why I think it is important to reinstate the certification requirement for freelance court reporters which was removed last June when the Kansas legislature was modifying the Kansas civil code to more closely conform to the federal civil code.

Approximately ten years ago KCRA was successful in introducing, and getting passed into law, legislation requiring freelance reporters to be certified in order to be able to take depositions in the State of Kansas. We continue to feel it is just as important today as it was ten years ago. Certification ensures that reporters have met the requisite standards of knowledge and skill necessary to provide the service they market themselves to have.

Certification is a requirement for official court reporters. We believe it is no less important to have qualified and certified reporters taking down the sworn testimony taken in preparation for court proceedings than it is to have a qualified and certified court reporter taking down the court proceedings themselves. Judges and attorneys need to be confident that the reporters providing the transcripts prior to the hearings and trials are equally as capable as the reporters they work with in court. Periodically it is necessary for freelance reporters to sit in court and act as an official reporter. If both freelance and official reporters are required to be certified, this would result in more reporters being available to assist the court system when necessary.

Court reporters are an officer of the court, are authorized to place people under oath, and responsible for documenting their sworn testimony. In addition, they are responsible for exhibits marked throughout a deposition and periodically contain sensitive personal information. This is a solemn responsibility and shouldn't be assigned lightly. Your constituents deserve the "guardian" of their record, should they be involved in litigation, to be certified.

In closing, KCRA would ask you to support this measure so we can get the certification reinstated as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

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Senate Judiciary
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