

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike O'Neal at 3:30 P.M. on January 12, 2005 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Michael Peterson- excused

Committee staff present: Jerry Ann Donaldson, Kansas Legislative Research  
Jill Wolters, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Cindy O'Neal, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

District Court Judge Nancy Parish, Shawnee County  
District Court Judge Tom Foster, Johnson County  
District Court Judge Meryl Wilson, Riley County  
Mark Gleeson - Family & Children Coordinator, Office of Judicial Administration

Chairman O'Neal introduced committee staff and committee members. Committee Rules for the House Judiciary Committee were distributed as were rules for conferees who wish to appear before the committee.

Chairman O'Neal turned the committees attention to receive informative news from the District Court Judges.

District Court Judge Nancy Parish, Shawnee County, reported that while there has been an overall increase in caseload filings the hiring of full time employee (FTE) have been minimal. She provided a spreadsheet with the types of cases filed and the number of FTE positions (Attachment 1).

District Court Judge Tom Foster, Johnson County, stated that there has been an increase in population in Johnson County and it is estimated that this year the population will increase 19% over last year.

Tort cases are down but most other types of cases are up, such as, a doubling in DUI cases. While the number of divorce cases remain stable, the docket is being taken up with more conflict issues between parents who are divorced. A new six session program called Higher Ground helps divorced parents learn how to deal with conflicts.

District Court Judge Meryl Wilson, Riley County, informed the committee of the Parent Support Pilot Program which was designed to include parents at all stages of court proceedings. He provided a handbook which explained the process (Attachment 2). In their county last year they had:

68 CINC cases, of which 34 didn't need emergency placement or hearing  
of the 34 cases left, 18% of them had no parent available  
6% were already in state custody  
2% requested a "parent supporter"

Mark Gleeson - Family & Children Coordinator, Office of Judicial Administration, commented that the courts are in the process of having forms translated into Spanish.

Committee meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2005, at 3:30 p.m. in room 313-S.