



KANSAS COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

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A. DALE CHAFFIN, Mission
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HON. LARRY McCLAIN, Overland Park
DR. TERRY SANDLIN, Topeka
MARY LOU WARREN, Great Bend
CHARLES E. WORDEN, Norton

Kansas Judicial Center
301 S.W. Tenth Street, Suite 140
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1507

Telephone (785) 296-2498
Facsimile (785) 296-1035

judicial.council@ksjc.ks.gov
www.kansasjudicialperformance.org

CHRISTY MOLZEN
Program Director

TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Gloria Farha Flentje, Chair, Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance

DATE: February 18, 2013

RE: Written Testimony on 2013 HB 2102 Relating to the Commission on Judicial Performance

Committee members:

I regret that I cannot appear before you today because of a prior family commitment out of the state. I hope that you will not view my absence as disinterest in the continuation and funding of the Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance.

I have served on the Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance since it was established by the legislature in 2006. Initially the Commission, made up of attorneys, judges and lay people worked tirelessly to create a program for evaluating all of the state judges in Kansas. We worked hard to establish an evaluation tool and process which followed the direction of the Legislature in the statutes. Actual evaluations began in 2007. For judges who stood for retention election in 2008 and 2010, the Commission published the results of the surveys on its website and, as directed by the statute, made a recommendation to voters about whether each judge should be retained. All sitting elected judges received the results of their evaluations as well although the statute requires that these evaluations be kept confidential.

These evaluations have had an important impact. First, for the merit selection judges, it provided the electorate and the judges with a scorecard on how well the judges are performing their job. Second, for all the state judges, it provides the only meaningful feedback that they receive about their performance and how they are perceived by those who appear before them. These evaluations have been an outstanding tool which enables the judges to improve their performance in their job.

I served as the head of the Human Resources department of a large Kansas Company until my retirement. In that position I have seen how employee evaluations have provided employees roadmaps to improving their performance and becoming more productive employees. The judicial evaluations serve as a similar tool. If you fund the evaluation program, we will see continued improvements in our judiciary.

With the help of the staff we have reduced the cost of the program to less than half of the original budget. We believe the evaluations, although not as broadly circulated, will still provide important information to the voters and to the judges.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gloria Farha Flentje
Wichita, Kansas
Chair, Kansas Commission on Judicial Performance