

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

Senate Bill 96

Paula Gilchrist
Douglas County Treasurer

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am unable to attend this morning's hearing, but would like to go on record as strongly supporting the testimony of my fellow County Treasurer's and encourage your support of Senate Bill 96.

Douglas County has two full-time and one part-time satellite locations, in addition to the Courthouse, that provide in-person service for the citizens of our county. Our three full time locations handle motor vehicle registrations almost equally at one-third each. We are fortunate to be operating within the same budget perimeters as before the implementation of MOVRS, thanks to a dedicated and hardworking staff.

Our motor vehicle operations are supported by some Douglas County General Funds. At the start of the national financial crisis, we first implemented a two dollar satellite fee in 2009 to subsidize costs. We had some protest from the public, and some callers stating the fee was worth the exchange for convenience and proximity to their work and home.

As government budgets face continued scrutiny and lack of funding sources, I view SB 96 as a contingency fund that we hope we never have to use. We do have higher expenses at our satellite locations than at the County-owned courthouse. However, we keep satellite expenses to a minimum, and our courthouse is not large enough to handle our current volume of in-person titles and registration work.

County Treasurer's provide motor vehicle services as subagents of the State. Funding for operations is determined by state statute. If the fees we collect for operation are not adequate, the satellite fee is one of our few alternatives. County government and State government do not have the resources to subsidize a growing population. If we were threatened by budget constraints, I would prefer being able to add a small fee at the courthouse rather than increasing satellite fees to a level that might create hardship for taxpayers.

I am only one County Treasurer that you will hear from regarding this issue, and we all bring a different perspective. We have different populations and sizes, different budget histories and approaches, and different needs. I think the flexibility at the local level allowed by SB 96 make this a fiscally responsible and effective means of assisting those

counties that need it without causing excess or harm to those that may not. It is also an insurance for local government services in increasingly difficult financial times.

I'd like to thank the Senate Committee on Transportation for taking the time to read my comments. I regret that I am unable to attend today's hearing, but know that my able colleagues will speak wisely on this issue.

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