

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hon. John Barker, Chairman
Hon. Charles Macheers, Vice Chairman
Hon. John Carmichael, R.M. Member

February 4, 2015
3:30 pm
Room 112-N

Chief Judge Daniel D. Creitz
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2160

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and this honorable committee for extending the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2160. Due to my court schedule I cannot appear in person, but the KDJA is represented today by Judge Thomas Foster who is available to testify. I am Daniel D. Creitz, Chief Judge of the Thirty-First Judicial District and a member of the Executive Board of the Kansas District Judges Association (KDJA) serving as the KDJA Legislative Co-Chair with Judge James Fleetwood, Chief Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial District. Judge Thomas Foster, District Judge of the Tenth Judicial District, is also a member of the KDJA Executive Board. The KDJA strongly supports HB 2160.

HB 2160 would amend K.S.A. 20-1 a 16 passed last session which created the electronic filing management fund. HB 2160 would allow the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to utilize funds in the electronic filing and management fund to cover a portion of the projected Judicial Branch budget shortfall for this fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. This budget shortfall is about \$3.6 million. HB 2160 would grant the Supreme Court in FY 2015 the flexibility to transfer any amount of the electronic filing management fund to the judicial branch docket fee fund so that it could be utilized to cover the budget shortfall. Passage of HB 2160 would have no effect on the State General Fund and also will not impact the implementation of E-Courts in Kansas.

With passage of HB 2160, assuming current judicial branch revenues remain stable at current levels and assuming that no additional cuts are made to the judicial branch budget in FY 2015, then the KDJA is optimistic that court closures will be avoided in FY 2015.

The KDJA Board members and its representatives have met with leadership in both bodies and the governor's office to discuss the essence of HB 2160. It is our understanding that Mr. Shaun Sullivan, the Budget Director, has agreed to include a proviso in the rescission bill utilizing the language from HB 2160.

Quick passage of this bill is essential so that these funds can be utilized to cover the budget shortfall. If the money was not available until July 1, 2015, then it would be too late and court closures in FY 2015 could occur. As a result, Section 4 of HB 2160 provides that it is effective upon publication in the Kansas register.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the KDJA.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Dale Creitz
Chief Judge, Thirty-First Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board Member and Legislative Co-Chair

Thomas Foster
District Judge, Tenth Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board and Legislative Committee Member