

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

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

March 10, 2015
3:30 pm
Room 112-N

Chief Judge Daniel D. Creitz
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 51

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and this honorable committee for extending the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 51. Due to my court schedule I cannot appear in person. 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. The KDJA strongly supports passage of SB 51, which relates to the judicial branch surcharge fee.

Under current law, the judicial branch surcharge fee sunsets July 1, 2015. SB 51, as amended would make permanent the judicial branch surcharge authorized by the Legislature in 2010 to fund nonjudicial personnel. Court fees and costs along with the surcharge fund have been utilized by the legislature to help fund the judicial branch. In FY 2014 the total of these funds was about \$17 million with about \$9 million being surcharge fees. Although the KDJA maintains that funding through the state general fund is necessary and essential for the long-term stability of the judicial branch budget, the reality is that these funds are being utilized to help fund the judiciary. As a result SB 51 is essential. The bill passed in the Senate with a vote of 34 to 6.

The KDJA urges passage of SB 51 since it contains essential funding for operations of the Kansas judicial branch. 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

James Fleetwood
Chief Judge, Eighteenth Judicial District
KDJA Executive Board Member and Legislative Co-Chair