



**KANSAS BAR
ASSOCIATION**

TO: **The Honorable John Barker, Chair**
 And Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: **Joseph N. Molina**
 On behalf of the Kansas Bar Association

RE: **HB 2704 concerning the judicial branch; relating to salaries of justices,
judges, and non-judicial employees**

DATE: **March 3, 2016**

The Kansas Bar Association (KBA) was founded in 1882 as a voluntary association for dedicated legal professionals and has more than 7,200 members, including lawyers, judges, law students, and paralegals. www.ksbar.org

The Kansas Bar Association provides this written testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB 2704** which provides for salary adjustments for Kansas judges and staff.

The KBA has a long standing policy of supporting proposals that strengthen the judicial branch and maintain the highest level of service to Kansas communities. HB 2704 is such a proposal.

HB 2704 will provide needed salary adjustments to current judges and their staff. These raises, totaling \$16.8 million, will ensure an effective judicial system. The judicial branch is comprised of nearly 1,600 employees and over 250 judges the majority of which is paid by the state. However, these employees and judges have not received a raise in over 6 years. The last attempt for an increase was in 2008 but this adjustment went unfunded.

Salary adjustments are vital to an effective, efficient judicial branch by keeping highly skilled employees. The judicial branch can ill afford to lose any of these valuable employees, such as clerks, court reports and assistants, and providing a competitive salary will aid in their retention. A competitive salary will also help in attracting the best and brightest to the judicial branch to help implement and maintain the E-Filing program.

The KBA is sensitive to the current fiscal outlook for the state and understand that limited resources are available for new initiatives. However, approving a salary adjustment for the judicial branch will send a strong message that these employees deliver a valuable and needed service to the state of Kansas

It is for these reasons that the Kansas Bar Association **SUPPORTS** HB 2704. On behalf of the Kansas Bar Association, I thank you for your time and attention.