



February 19, 2016

Members of the House Judiciary Committee
Chairman Barker

RE: Market Adjustment Bill – Judicial Pay
2016 HB 2704 (Support)

DeVaughn James Injury Lawyers represents individuals who have been hurt in automobile collisions. Our attorneys regularly try cases throughout Kansas. Our clients rely on the Court system as they seek justice.

The Court system is vital to a functioning society. The foundation of our democracy is a court system that fairly and independently applies the law. The bedrock of our courts are judges and their judicial assistants. For too long we have ignored the salaries of these hardworking Kansans.

Our courts are only as good as the judges that are fairly applying the law.

“President Reagan use to speak of the Soviet constitution, and he noted that it purported to grant wonderful rights. . .[b]ut those rights were empty promises, because that system did not have an independent judiciary to uphold the rule of law and enforce those rights.”

John Roberts, Chief Justice United States Supreme Court.

The lagging pay of our District Court Judges will soon affect the quality of those interested in serving as Judge. We need to ensure that excellent lawyers committed to the rule of law and the Kansas Constitution serve as District Court Judges. If the State of Kansas continues to lag behind other states in judicial pay, fewer attorneys will seek to serve as judges and Kansans will suffer.

When I learned that our Trial Court Judges ranked 50 out of 51 (States and D.C.)¹ I felt compelled to submit this testimony. I am proud of our judiciary and the difficult work they do. It is time for our legislature to recognize their efforts and provide a much needed pay increase. I urge you and the committee to pass this bill.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard W. James', written over a horizontal line.

Richard W. James
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¹ National Center for State Courts