



**KANSAS BAR  
ASSOCIATION**

**TO:           The Honorable Troy Waymaster, Chair**  
                  And Members of the Committee on Appropriations

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

**RE:           HB 2541 - Crediting docket fees to the state general fund instead of the**  
                  judicial branch docket fee fund; crediting marriage license fees and drivers'  
                  license reinstatement fees to the state general fund instead of the judicial  
                  branch nonjudicial salary adjustment fund

**DATE:       February 9, 2022**

Chairman Waymaster and members of the Committee on Appropriations, my name is Joseph Molina and I appear on behalf of the Kansas Bar Association on HB 2541 - Crediting docket fees to the state general fund instead of the judicial branch docket fee fund; crediting marriage license fees and drivers' license reinstatement fees to the state general fund instead of the judicial branch nonjudicial salary adjustment fund.

The Kansas Bar Association has a long history of supporting the full and proper funding of the Kansas Judicial Branch. Our members, their clients, and your constituents interact with the judicial branch, its courts, and staff daily. A properly funded Judicial Branch ensures an efficient court system that Kansas citizens can rely upon to settle conflicts and resolve cases within recognized time standards without overly burdening judicial staff and the judicial system.

The Kansas Judicial Branch has shown that it is an excellent steward of taxpayer funding. The Judicial Branch has used funding provided by the legislature to meet its constitutional and statutory requirements to resolve disputes, been flexible when met with challenges and responded with necessary speed to ensure courts are safe, secure, and accessible.

However, not all things are within the Judicial Branch's control. We are all too familiar with the disruption COVID has had on public life. The Kansas Judicial Branch is no different and no less immune to being impacted by COVID related issues. The main issue and one HB 2541 would likely improve is that of stability within the Judicial Branch's funding stream. At present the Kansas Judicial Branch depends upon the collection of docket fees to fully fund its operations. Without these docket fees the court would be forced to take drastic action. The courts saw docket fees fall over \$7 million due to COVID. The Judicial Branch worked with the Legislature on a

supplemental appropriation, and it was able to close the budget hole and avoid any significant operational issues. While we appreciate the work done by all parties to deal with that funding issue, the KBA is keenly aware of the stress placed upon the system due to that unforeseen consequence of COVID.

With HB 2541, the Judicial Branch would be afforded added stability within its funding system. The KBA and our members believe it is important to have stable, consistent access to the courts. Citizens must know that courts will be open, cases will be filed, issues heard and resolved. For many individuals entering the court system can be a difficult time. HB 2541 ensures there is stability within the court system, and it allows the courts to maintain its high level of service the public.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to stand for questions when appropriate.

**About the Kansas Bar Association:**

The Kansas Bar Association (KBA) was founded in 1882 as a voluntary association for dedicated legal professionals. Its more than 5,500 members include lawyers, judges, law students, and paralegals. [www.ksbar.org](http://www.ksbar.org)