

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6016

A RESOLUTION recognizing March 18, 2023, as Kansas Public Defender Day.

WHEREAS, March 18, 2023, is the 60th Anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court case *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which established the right of all people in the United States to competent criminal defense counsel, including those who cannot afford an attorney; and

WHEREAS, The right to competent criminal defense counsel is a fundamental right enshrined in the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Section 10 of the Kansas Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, Kansans have recognized this important right in their state statutes since 1868; and

WHEREAS, The State of Kansas opened the first public defender offices in the state in 1972; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas public defender agency, also known as the State Board of Indigents' Defense Services, was established in 1982; and

WHEREAS, The employees of the State Board of Indigents' Defense Services and the assigned private counsel are tasked with fulfilling the constitutional promise of a zealous defense and guarding the constitutional rights of every person in Kansas facing felony criminal charges who cannot afford an attorney; and

WHEREAS, The employees of the State Board of Indigents' Defense Services and the assigned private counsel are essential to achieving a fair and equal justice system; and

WHEREAS, 85% of all Kansans facing felony criminal charges in Kansas are indigent and cannot pay for an attorney: Now, therefore, *Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas:* That we recognize March 18, 2023, as Kansas Public Defender Day; and

Be it further resolved: That we acknowledge the work being done by the employees of the public defender agency and the assigned private counsel in safeguarding fundamental constitutional rights in Kansas; and

Be it further resolved: That we recognize the importance of the right held by all people in the United States, including those in poverty, to competent criminal defense counsel; and

Be it further resolved: That we commend the continuing mission of the State Board of Indigents' Defense Services to provide zealous advocacy for all who are indigent and accused.

House Resolution No. 6016 was sponsored by Representatives Fred Patton, John Carmichael and Mark Schreiber.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the HOUSE, and was adopted by that body

Speaker of the House.

Chief Clerk of the House.