



March 19, 2024

Senator Kellie Warren, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: KCDAAs Support of HB 2605

Chair Warren and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jeff Wagaman from Kearney Associates, Inc., appearing today on behalf of our client, the Kansas County and District Attorneys Association (KCDAAs). KCDAAs is the professional organization for persecutors in the State of Kansas. The purpose of the Association is to promote, improve, and facilitate the administration of justice in the State of Kansas.

The KCDAAs is proud to support HB 2605, a measure to increase the maximum rate paid to appointed counsel representing an indigent defendant. This bill would increase the maximum hourly rate of compensation for appointed defense attorneys from \$80 per hour to a minimum of \$120 per hour.

There is a shortage of attorneys in Kansas. The efficient adjudication of justice requires effective representation for both prosecution and defendants. The lack of attorneys on both sides of the courtroom is an increasing problem that this bill helps address. Many criminal trial cases are continued because of lack of counsel for the Defendants. This not only clogs up our judicial system, but also postpones an outcome, which prevents closure for victims and their families.

KCDAAs is in strong support of raising the hourly rate for criminal trial work for indigent Defendants. We strongly urge you to pass HB 2605 favorably. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.