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# KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COURT SERVICES OFFICERS

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
Hon. Rick Wilborn, Chairman

March 20, 2017, 10:30 a.m.  
Room 346-S

Chris Esquibel, President for Kansas Association of Court Services Officers (KACSO)  
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## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2041 Extending the Judicial Branch Surcharge

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and this honorable committee for extending the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2041. I am Chris Esquibel and I am the current President for Kansas Association of Court Services Officers (CCSO) and a Court Service Officer in the 29<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in Wyandotte County. I am here today as a Court Services Officer (CSO) and as a member of the Kansas Association of Court Services Officers (KACSO), which currently represents over 340 officers across Kansas.

HB 2041 is relating to court fees and cost for the Judicial Branch surcharge fund. These surcharges are vital to the Judicial Branch and affect all non-judicial staff, which includes Court Services Officers (Adult and Juvenile Probation and Diversion Officers, Child In Need of Care and Domestic Officers). These surcharges go directly to the non-judicial staff salaries.

If these surcharges are not passed it will affect non-judicial staff's current jobs which are already on dismal times. With current salaries, we already have a difficult time retaining staff in all positions. In the past few months, Court Services has seen a significant amount of Officers take other jobs with more desirable salaries. I feel if the surcharges are not renewed and salaries decline we will see more Officers leave or retire early for other jobs. This would not be in the best interest of the State of Kansas; Court Services Officers are responsible for keeping the public safe by monitoring offenders for the court. On a daily basis throughout the state we deal with drug and sex offenders, gang members, individuals that

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have mental health diagnoses and many others. Court Services Officers have to have the necessary skills to diffuse hostile situations. They have to be certified in numerous evidence based programs and maintain those certifications yearly. To get hired and maintain a position as a Court Services Officer individuals have to pass an annual FBI background check. You can see why it is important that we retain our Court Services Officers, why spend the money to train and certify them to go work for other agencies or private sector.

OJA's current salary study that was released back in November 2016 revealed that more than one-fourth of Judicial Branch employee positions have starting salaries below the federal poverty level for a family of four. Nearly one-third of employees also need to work jobs outside the Judicial Branch to pay the bills, which is 24% higher than the Kansas average. Those numbers will only increase if HB 2041 is not passed. Please consider this bill favorably.

KACSO thanks the committee for allowing us to provide testimony on HB2041. If you should have any question please email me at [cesquibel@wycokck.org](mailto:cesquibel@wycokck.org).

KACSO



Chris Esquibel  
KACSO President

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