

DISTRICT COURT OF KANSAS

CHAMBERS OF
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JUDGE
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WYANDOTTE COUNTY

February 15, 2018

Judiciary Committee

Testimony Regarding SB 409: Creating statutory procedures and limitations concerning contact with jurors

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is J. Dexter Burdette and I am a District Judge in the 29th Judicial District. I have been a judge since 1988. I have presided over many criminal actions and jury trials since then.

Several years ago after being convicted of "attempted capital murder," and other crimes, a defendant contacted a few jurors by letters. Though not overtly threatening in tone, the contact nonetheless frightened and concerned the jurors. They were referred to the District Attorney's Office, but they and I were powerless to prevent this behavior or punish the defendant.

This proposed legislation gives us a tool to use in punishing post-conviction contact from a defendant to a juror. In light of the sacrifices and risk we ask of the jurors, this proposed Senate Bill 409 of Senator Pettey is a strong step in the right direction of protecting a juror's privacy and peace of mind through post-conviction.

Thank you for your time.

J. Dexter Burdette