



State of Kansas

Office of Judicial Administration

Kansas Judicial Center

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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Honorable Representative Lance Kinzer, Chair

Proposed Legislation Regarding Criminal Sentencing

August 26, 2013

NEUTRAL WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information for your consideration regarding the proposed hard 50 criminal sentencing legislation. **Unless amendments are adopted in Subsection (c) to exclude resentencing offenders who are currently serving sentences, then enacting the proposal would require approximately \$430,868 in expenditures by the Judicial Branch in FY 2014. If such amendments are adopted, the Judicial Branch fiscal note would fall to approximately \$48,848.** For purposes of the fiscal impact, an assumption was made that all expenditures would occur in FY 2014, although it is unknown whether all sentencing proceedings, and therefore expenditures, would occur in FY 2014, or whether some would be carried over into FY 2015. This is our best effort to guess at the resulting fiscal note.

Expenditures: The Judicial Branch would incur additional work with the enactment of this bill, which will require a separate sentencing proceeding in first degree premeditated murder cases in which the hard 40 and hard 50 sentence applies.

A significant effort has been made to determine the number of persons to whom the provisions of the bill would apply. The following table notes the actual or estimated numbers of persons in each of four categories, and notes the source for the actual number or estimate:

Numbers of Persons Impacted by Hard 50 Sentencing Bill		
Category of Persons Impacted	Entity Providing the Actual or Estimated Number	Number
Persons Imprisoned with Hard 40 Sentence Imposed	Actual Number – Kansas Sentencing Commission	46
Persons Imprisoned with Hard 50 Sentence Imposed	Actual Number – Kansas Sentencing Commission	60
Persons charged with first degree premeditated murder who have not yet been tried	Estimate – Kansas Attorney General’s Office	35
Ongoing annual cases to be tried	Estimate derived from actual and estimated cases noted above	5 per year

RESENTENCING OFFENDERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY SERVING SENTENCES

As written, the bill would require a separate sentencing proceeding for each of the offenders currently serving hard 40 and hard 50 terms. Even if the original jurors who heard each of these cases could be located and brought back for the sentencing proceeding, a significant amount of time would be needed to refresh their memories as to the previous trial testimony relevant to sentencing. In most cases, it would appear likely that a new jury would need to be impaneled and that major portions of the evidence presented at trial would need to be presented to the new jury.

It is estimated that it would take a minimum of eight judge days to conduct the sentencing proceeding for those cases in which the trial has already been held. This would include the time needed to empanel a jury and preside over the proceeding, as well as time to hear, research, and decide pre-proceeding motions and other issues.

A minimum of two days of clerk time would be needed to summon the jurors, answer questions, provide documents to the parties, file new documents, schedule hearings and other matters, and deal with other issues associated with the proceedings.

In speaking with representatives of the Attorney General’s Office and the State Board of Indigents’ Defense Services, it is unclear whether this sentencing proceeding would be sought for those persons currently serving hard 40 sentences. However, cost estimates for sentencing proceedings in hard 40 cases are provided, should sentencing proceedings be sought in those cases. The following tables note the estimated costs if these proceedings were held for each of the persons sentenced to hard 40 and hard 50 terms, as well as those awaiting trial in premeditated first degree murder cases. Because senior judges

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could address this issue without adding an ongoing full-time position, senior judge time would be the most cost-effective way to address this issue. For that same reason, temporary clerk hours are also used.

It is also not known how many sentencing proceedings could be completed in FY 2014, the current fiscal year, and how many would need to be completed in FY 2015. Therefore, the cost is noted as an FY 2014/FY 2015 cost.

Judge Time – Hard 40 Sentences		FY 2014/FY 2015 Cost
46 proceedings x 8 days	368 days = app. 3.5 senior judge contracts	\$149,800
Clerk Time		
46 proceedings x 2 days	92 days of temporary help, at \$11.29 per hour, plus fringes	\$9,040
TOTAL		\$158,840

Judge Time – Hard 50 Sentences		FY 2014/FY 2015 Cost
60 proceedings x 8 days	480 days = app. 5 senior judge contracts	\$213,999
Clerk Time		
60 proceedings x 2 days	120 days of temporary help, at \$11.29 per hour, plus fringes	\$11,790
TOTAL		\$225,789

CASES NOT YET TRIED

For the estimated 35 cases in which persons have been charged, but not yet tried, some additional judge and clerk time would also be needed. However, because the same jury would be used for both the trial and the sentencing proceeding, the bill’s provisions would require less additional time. It is estimated that two days of senior judge time would be needed for each case, and that one additional day of clerk time would be needed for each case. It should be noted that this new sentencing proceeding will be needed only in those cases resulting in a conviction, and it is unknown in how many of those 35 cases that will occur. Because an estimated conviction rate cannot be determined, the following table shows the estimated cost of sentencing proceedings in all 35 cases.

Judge Time – Cases Not Yet Tried		FY 2014/FY 2015 Cost
35 proceedings x 2 days	70 judge days = 1 senior judge contract	\$42,800
Clerk Time		
35 proceedings x 1 day	35 days of temporary help, at \$11.29 per hour, plus fringes	\$3,439
TOTAL		\$46,239

Although it is difficult to predict the number of persons who will commit first degree premeditated murder in the future and who will be subject to the provisions of this bill, an estimated five cases per year appears reasonable based on the numbers of cases noted above. Using the same two days for a judge and one day for temporary clerk time, the amount of work would not justify an additional senior judge contract. If temporary judge and clerk time were used, the total judge and clerk cost would be \$2,609 annually.

The bill's provisions are almost certain to result in a significant number of new appeals and additional issues on appeal. It is also possible that there will be additional trial court proceedings pursuant to K.S.A. 50-1507 and subsequent appeals of those decisions. An additional appellate research attorney position or positions may be needed to address these issues, but until we have actual experience with the number of appeals and additional issues on appeal that will result, we are unable to estimate this fiscal impact.

Revenue: Passage of this bill could result in the collection of docket fees in those cases filed under the provisions of the bill. Nevertheless, until the courts have had an opportunity to operate under the provisions of this bill, an accurate estimate of the fiscal effect on revenues for the Judicial Branch cannot be given.

County Fiscal Effect: County governments would pay the statutory daily rate for the jurors, which shall be not less than \$10 nor more than \$50 per day, plus mileage reimbursement. For those cases in which the hard 40 or 50 sentence has already been imposed, the first day of juror selection would include an estimated jury panel of at least 60 persons from which the panel of 12 would be selected.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information.