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Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the House Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 146.

House Bill 146 is a practical and necessary reform that will revise the civil service status of certain county probation positions, shifting them from classified to unclassified. This change will provide courts with greater flexibility in managing their probation departments while also generating cost savings for local governments.

Why This Bill Matters

Probation departments are a vital part of our justice system, ensuring that individuals on supervised release comply with court orders and receive the appropriate monitoring and support. However, under the current law, the classified civil service status imposes rigid hiring and termination processes that can limit a court's ability to adapt to changing needs and budget constraints.

By reclassifying these positions as unclassified, House Bill 146 will allow courts to better manage their probation personnel, leading to increased efficiency, improved service delivery, and significant cost savings.

Key Benefits of House Bill 146

1. **Reduced Administrative Costs** – Under the classified system, termination or reassignment of underperforming employees is often a lengthy and costly process, involving multiple layers of appeals and legal procedures. Unclassified status streamlines these processes, reducing administrative expenses and saving taxpayer dollars.
2. **Lower Training and Turnover Costs** – Courts will have greater flexibility to hire and retain the best candidates for probation positions, ensuring that resources spent on training and professional development are invested in employees who are the right fit for the job. When courts are forced to retain employees who are not meeting expectations, it leads to wasted training investments and lower departmental efficiency.
3. **Efficient Budget Management** – Allowing courts to quickly adapt their probation workforce to meet changing caseloads will help them allocate resources more effectively.

This is especially important for counties operating under tight budget constraints, where every dollar spent must be justified in terms of public safety and rehabilitation outcomes.

4. Improved Service Delivery Without Increased Spending – When courts have the ability to hire and manage personnel based on merit and performance rather than navigating burdensome civil service restrictions, they can enhance public safety and rehabilitation efforts without additional financial burdens on local governments.

Conclusion

House Bill 146 is a fiscally responsible reform that will empower our courts, improve efficiency, and ensure that probation departments operate in the most cost-effective manner possible. By reducing unnecessary administrative costs, improving workforce management, and giving courts greater control over their personnel, this legislation will help counties maximize their budgets while maintaining high-quality probation services.

I respectfully urge the committee's support for House Bill 146 and look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.