



Jim Hughes, Laura Lanese

State Representatives, 24th House District, 23rd House District

Chairman Butler, Ranking Member Boggs, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 174. This is a simple bill that would create two additional judgeships in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations, to be elected in 2018, with terms to begin in January of 2019. The last time a judge was added to this branch was for the term beginning January 1997.

Among Ohio's courts of common pleas containing major metropolitan areas, Franklin County is unique in that the same set of judges hears all domestic relations and juvenile cases. Franklin County's entire domestic relations and juvenile incoming caseload per judge in 2014 was the largest among the five major metropolitan counties (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, and Summit counties), with 7,825 incoming cases per judge. As a matter of comparison, Hamilton County Judges have 78% of the incoming case load and Cuyahoga County Judges have less than 30% of the incoming caseload compared to Franklin County Judges.

In a letter last year, the Supreme Court's staff analyzed case load and population growth data and concluded that the need for additional judgeships is well supported by the data.

Thank you again for allowing us to testify on House Bill 174 and we would be happy to answer any questions at this time.