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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 174
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Before the Senate Judiciary Committee

Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary 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, one to be elected in 2018, and the other to be elected in 2020. 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.

HB 174 contains an emergency clause to ensure that judgeship candidates can meet the filing deadline for the 2018 election.

This bill received near-unanimous and bipartisan support as it passed out of the House with a vote of 92-1.

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