JEAN SCHMIDT
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Matthews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 283, to add a judge to the Adams County common pleas court.

As my colleague and friend, Representative Pizulli, has stated, this bill is necessary. The juvenile docket in the county has drastically increased which is problematic in two ways: first, children in these cases face undue burden as they wait for their cases to be heard or to finish, an issue which can have serious effects on the child's overall outcome in life; and second, when more focus must be given to one jurisdiction over another, other cases may not get the attention they require.

I had the honor of representing Adams County for nearly eight years. I have remained in contact with numerous county elected officials and can tell you that local leaders believe that it is time for a second common pleas judge. In fact, four counties, including Adams County, have only one common pleas judge that encompasses all the jurisdictions of the common pleas court. I have full faith in our judges to do the job before them. However, I believe we should afford them and those who take part in these cases the ability to have speedier trials. By having one judge take on the civil, criminal, and domestic relations cases, while another will oversee probate and juvenile cases, we can help move cases along faster.

House Bill 283 will help Adams County families. In fact, earlier this week, it was reported to me that Children Services in Adams County has nearly the same number of children in temporary custody as Clermont County. Think about that – Adams County, with a population of under 30,000 residents versus the county I partially represent with over 200,000 residents.

I humbly ask this committee to act swiftly to ensure that Adams County's children get the attention that they deserve. We can do better. I thank you for allowing me the time to speak today and we are happy to answer any questions.