



**Testimony of John Miller
Norton County Commissioner
Past President, Kansas Legislative Policy Group**

Before the Senate Judiciary Committee

Member Counties

*Barber
Cheyenne
Clark
Cloud
Ellis
Finney
Gove
Grant
Gray
Hamilton
Harper
Haskell
Lane
Logan
Meade
Morton
Ness
Norton
Rawlins
Rice
Russell
Scott
Sheridan
Stanton
Stevens
Thomas
Trego
Wallace
Wichita*

Senate Bill No. 423

February 16, 2012

Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

Kansas Legislative Policy Group (KLPG) is pleased to provide written testimony today. KLPG is a bipartisan, non-profit corporation of elected County Commissioners from 29 western Kansas counties. We appreciate the opportunity to submit remarks on this issue, which is of great importance to our member counties.

Senate Bill No. 423 seeks to reassign court resources across judicial districts. Our Commissioners fully understand the lack of State funding to meet court personnel requirements. We, too, make decisions daily to meet our funding obligations for the courts. Judicial District/Counties with smaller caseloads may now lose the local presence of a district judge or magistrate within their communities.

KLPG has long supported one judge per county, and we continue our advocacy in this effort. We believe that judges and magistrates have a responsibility to look out for the interests of the county in which they reside. It will be difficult for a judge from another area to come into a community and know the community's interests and preside over cases. Situations and circumstances also arise that will require law enforcement personnel to immediately interact with a judge to obtain a search warrant or other imperative court order. These situations may occur at any time of the day or night, and immediate accessibility to a judge is crucial. Senate Bill No. 423 may impact law enforcement's ability to perform their duties expeditiously. We believe that judges should personally look across the table at law enforcement when reviewing a request for a warrant or other order requiring immediate action.

KLPG opposes the removal and reassignment of judicial positions between districts.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to present this testimony.