

Testimony in Opposition to ERO 42.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee I am opposed to the Governor's executive order merging Juvenile Justice Authority into the Department of Corrections.

I have served in the Kansas House for 11 years. I was privileged to serve on the Kansas Recodification, Rehabilitation and Restoration Commission which met for three years to address public safety and criminal justice concerns in Kansas. This Commission included members of law enforcement, corrections, mental health, judiciary, defense and prosecuting attorneys. I have also spent 8 years on the Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice.

Finally, served as an Assistant District Attorney where I prosecuted both adults and juveniles.

My opposition is as follows:

- Nothing about the combining of Corrections & JJA corrects any of the issues identified in Post Audit on JJA.
- Culture of corrections significantly different from that of JJA. Corrections are focused on housing violent and repeat criminals with components of reducing recidivism; JJA is focused on changing the behavior of juvenile offenders to avoid creating lifelong criminals.
- The creation of the current JJA came after 2 years of study with input by stakeholders and experts in Kansas as well as national at large. The care and scope of discussion recognized the complexity of issues surrounding the Juvenile Justice System. The decision of the legislature and Governor in 1997, balance the need to punish offenders with need to change their behaviors. Finally, recognizing every juvenile offender will return to someone's community.
- Imagine significant lost revenue to the state where do you think a combined Corrections and JJA will focus its resources? Continuing to house the violent and repeat criminals or programs designed to change juvenile behaviors?

I would request this committee recommend ERO 42 be rejected by the legislature. I further suggest a bill, or interim committee be commissioned to engage stakeholders and experts to analysis the merger idea and make recommendations to the 2014 legislature.

Thank you.