

STATE OF KANSAS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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STEPHEN OWENS  
74TH DISTRICT

**Support of HB 2429**

Adding a Public Defender to the  
Criminal Justice Reform Commission

Members of the House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice:

The Criminal Justice Reform Commission began meeting in August of 2019 with a specific charge to look at various aspects of the system and make recommendations the entire legislative body might consider to benefit the state. Part of our responsibility was to provide an interim report with recommendations for the 2020 session. This bill is one of many recommendations from the commission.

The law creating the commission specifically allows for **EITHER** a criminal defense attorney or public defender to be a voting member of the task force. The Governor chose to have a defense attorney as her appointment. Throughout our work on the commission, we as a body have realized the unique perspective a public defender would have in addition to a criminal defense attorney. While the current appointee does a fantastic job, we as a body unanimously agreed that adding a public defender would further enhance the work we are doing.

I would ask that you SUPPORT HB 2429 so that we can add this important perspective to our work.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Owens', written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Owens  
Vice-Chair, Criminal Justice Reform Commission