

To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Amanda L. Stanley, General Counsel

Date: January 27, 2021

RE: HB 2096 Testimony in Support

We want to thank Chairman Patton and the members of the Committee for affording the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2096.

We live in a divided world where grievances are amplified by social media. When combined with easy access to the residential information of our court staff, it results in increased security risks that should be taken seriously.

When discussing the safety of the federal judiciary in its 2021 fiscal budget submission to Congress, the Marshals Service said that “Over the past three years, incidents, inappropriate communications, and threats rose steadily by more than 40%’....It also said it ‘expects this rise to steadily increase over the next several years and anticipates an equal rise in more complex threats.’”¹

In an article in Bloomberg Law on the Federal Bench, John Muffler, former administrator and chief inspector of the U.S. Marshals Service National Center for Judicial Security, discussed how violence against judges generally occurs away from the court and other secured environments. The National Judicial College has even had to develop a checklist for judges on residential security.² Muffler called on legislatures to do more to protect judges’ information in the cyber realm.³

After a gunman opened fire at U.S. District Judge Salas’ home, she encouraged increased cyber protections for all judges. “We know that our job requires us to make tough calls, and sometimes those calls can leave people angry and upset,’ Salas said after the attack that also left her husband, defense attorney Mark Anderl, injured. ‘But what we cannot accept is when we are forced to live in fear for our lives because personal information, like our home addresses, can easily be obtained by anyone seeking to do us or our families harm.’”⁴

¹ <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/shooting-at-federal-judges-home-highlights-risks-outside-court>

² <https://www.judges.org/news-and-info/residential-security-for-judges/>

³ <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/shooting-at-federal-judges-home-highlights-risks-outside-court>

⁴ <https://www.abajournal.com/web/article/attack-on-judges-family-puts-judicial-security-center-stage>

This same logic about the federal bench is important at the State level. We greatly appreciate this legislation that seeks to add additional cyber protections for our municipal court judges, city attorneys, and other municipal court employees. While we sincerely hope these protections are never needed, we appreciate the State taking a proactive approach to increase the safety of vital municipal staff by creating a process for the removal of their residential addresses from easily searchable public websites.