

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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May 1, 2025

TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER REGARDING:

House Bill No. 6049

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO COURTS AND CIVIL PROCEDURE— PROCEDURE GENERALLY--FEES

Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

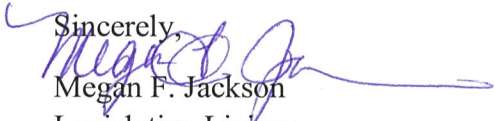
The Office of the Public Defender supports HB6049, which would increase fees paid to jurors to fifty dollars (\$50.00) per day. Juror participation is essential to the effective functioning of our justice system; juries serve a vital role in ensuring that trials are fair, equitable, and reflect a true cross-section of society. It is critical that we do all we can to encourage diverse participation in jury service, and increasing juror compensation would significantly contribute to this goal.

Several states have begun to recognize that there is a direct connection between jury fees and the demographic makeup of juries, as lower fees impact the number of excusals for financial hardship. In July 2023, the National Center for State Courts reported, "Six states passed legislation in 2023 to increase juror compensation." NCSC report, six states increase juror pay, Nat'l Ctr. for State Cts. (July 5, 2023). This move toward fairer compensation for jury service is crucial for ensuring that juries reflect the demographics of the broader community, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and fairness of trials.

Jury service is one of the cornerstones of our judicial system. By providing fair compensation, we not only recognize the time and responsibility jurors devote but also reinforce the principle that justice should be determined by a diverse group of peers. Without adequate compensation, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may be dissuaded from participating, which can skew the composition of juries and undermine the system's fairness.

The Office of the Public Defender urges the Committee to support this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Megan F. Jackson

Legislative Liaison

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Administration	Appeals	Felony Division	Misdemeanor/PAC	Licht VOP Unit	Family Court	Investigations
222-1511	222-1510	222-1540	222-1520	222-1312	222-1530	222-3492