

Peter R. Tovey  
petert@hillsborolawgroup.com

Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair

Senate Judiciary Committee, Members

RE: HB 3399 - testimony in support

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members:

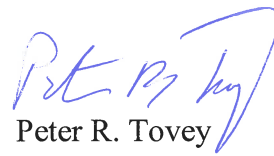
I currently practice in Washington County and I have had a few opportunities to appear for cases in municipal and justice courts. My experience in these courts was very eye opening. I feel that many litigants who appear in these forums face the same consequences as litigants in Circuit courts (especially in DUII and Reckless Driving cases), yet justice is not being fully served.

By establishing minimal educational standards for judges, these courts will be more effective and the courts findings and orders will make sense to both lawyers and non-lawyers. It will also force municipal and justice court judges to collaborate and discuss reoccurring issues amongst themselves or with Circuit court judges.

I currently have a case pending in municipal court where the judge is making findings contrary to judges in Circuit court and has no basis to do so. I have a hearing coming up next week, so we will see how it goes. I had another case in justice court a couple of months ago where the judge did not seem familiar with some of the rules of evidence and did not fully explain his findings.

I am very much in support of HB 3399 and believe that it will benefit the municipal and justice court judges, the court system, the prosecution, the defense bar, and litigants themselves. Justice delayed is justice denied. In the same vein, second rate justice is not justice at all.

Sincerely,



Peter R. Tovey  
Attorney at Law