

SCR1611 Proponent Written Only Testimony

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611 is about giving Kansans a voice in the selection of our Supreme Court justices—a right we currently do not have.

Right now, justices are chosen through an appointment process controlled by a commission dominated by lawyers. This system limits public input, leaving the final decision in the hands of a small, unelected group. The people of Kansas should have the right to elect those who interpret our laws at the highest level.

While justices currently face retention elections, history has shown that it is incredibly rare for a justice to be removed. The reality is that voters are often unfamiliar with judicial candidates and unsure of what a "no" vote actually means. Direct elections would make the process clearer and ensure that justices are truly accountable to the people, not just the legal community.

SCR 1611 would replace this system with direct elections, ensuring that justices are accountable to the voters rather than a select few. Other public officials—including the Governor, Attorney General, and members of the Legislature—are elected by the people. Our Supreme Court justices should be no different.

This amendment also maintains stability by keeping six-year terms and a staggered election schedule, preventing complete turnover at once. It aligns Kansas with many other states that successfully elect their justices and ensures a more open, transparent selection process.

A vote for SCR 1611 is a vote to give Kansans a say in shaping their judicial system. I urge the committee to advance this resolution and allow the people to decide.

Respectfully submitted,

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