

Edward Acosta

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

N/A

Written Only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Edward Acosta and I am a voter in Douglas County/Lawrence. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

It matters to me because I do not think myself or the public should be at the mercy of political/elected officials.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Ashley All

Kansas Coalition for Common Sense, President

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

Chairwoman Susan Humphries, Vice-Chair Laura Williams, Ranking Member Dan Osman, and members of the House Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SCR 1611. I respectfully submit this statement in opposition to SCR 1611 and encourage each of you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Very simply, SCR 1611 would unnecessarily politicize the Kansas Supreme Court - a critical, independent branch of government that resolves disputes about Kansas laws and upholds the constitutional rights of Kansas citizens.

SCR 1611 would change the Kansas Constitution and eliminate the nonpartisan, merit selection process for Kansas Supreme Court Justices that has served the people of Kansas well for decades. This amendment would replace the current process where justices are selected based on experience with a hyper-partisan election process. That consequential change would allow wealthy political donors, dark money from outside Kansas, and partisan loyalty to influence our highest Court. It would NOT give power to regular Kansans. It would give power to a few people and groups with the most money.

Kansans may disagree on many issues. Yet, Kansans value our independent, fair judiciary. We value the experience that the Court brings to its decisions. The current nominating commission consists of regular Kansans, as well as attorneys selected by their peers. This group interviews judicial candidates in an open, transparent public meeting. The records from these interviews are open and available to the public. This respected process allows for the most competent and knowledgeable legal practitioners to be elevated to the highest Court.

Changing the Kansas Constitution to politicize the courts will put partisanship ahead of experience, impartiality, and fairness. Kansans agree that the Kansas Supreme Court should be

able to make decisions fairly and based on the law and the facts of the case, free from political and partisan influence outside the courtroom.

Thank you again for your time. I respectfully ask you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Christy Allen

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Christy Allen and I am a voter in Johnson County/Lenexa. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Keep dark money out of our court system. Politics has no place in having influence over our courts that are meant to stand independently. It is very concerning that our courts that the people should be able to trust could be influenced by partisan agendas. Kansans deserve an independent judiciary.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my position and thoughts on this bill, and I implore you to vote NOT on the passage of SCR 1611. We are paying attention to how each of you vote. Thank you.

I am opposed to SCR 1611 that would put a constitutional amendment on the August 4, 2025 ballot.

Our current method of choosing Justices has worked for six decades. It is a merit-based process. A nonpartisan commission, representing all corners of the state, vets candidates and sends the three most qualified ones to the current Governor. The Governor, elected by all Kansans, selects the best candidate of the three for the that SCR 1611 isn't about fairness.

Electing Kansas Supreme Court justices doesn't put power in the hands of the people. It puts each Supreme Court seat up for sale. Justices will have to campaign like politicians -- raising money, running attack ads, and courting wealthy donors. It's not about justice. It's about selling off the Supreme Court to the highest bidder. Once we put a "For Sale" sign on the Kansas Supreme Court, we may never get justice back. I urge you to vote against SCR1611.

Audrey Asher

Sara Askew

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. I am Sara Askew from Wichita and I am asking you to vote no on SCR 1611.

The merit based system our courts currently used elevates qualified candidates and prevents politization of the courts. Any attempt to change this to a partisan process seems to be a blatant power grab and an attempt to stack courts in one party's favor. Our courts have been non-partisan and fair. The panel method is used by the majority of states. It keeps politics out of our courts. If Supreme Court Justices are not supposed to be partisan, neither should our state justices. It will make our elections vastly more expensive and bring politics into an arena they do not belong.

In closing I ask you to vote no on SCR 1611

Angela B

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Chair People and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Angela B and I am a voter in Sedgwick County/ Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I believe we do not need to fundamentally change the way Kansas Supreme Court justices are selected.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 13, 2025**  
**SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony**

Meghan Balkan, Kansas Licensed Cosmetologist  
meghanbalkan@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am here today to strongly oppose any effort to inject politics into our courts. The integrity of our judicial system depends on justices and judges being free to rule based on the law, not political pressure or campaign contributions.

The Kansas Supreme Court has a constitutional duty to uphold justice fairly and impartially for all Kansans. This requires a judiciary that is independent from political influence, unlike the legislative and executive branches. The current Supreme Court Nominating Commission process has served Kansas well, ensuring that our justices are selected based on merit, not political ideology or special interests.



In states where Supreme Court justices are elected, we have seen the devastating effects of politicization. These elections become high-stakes, multimillion-dollar political battles, often influenced by out-of-state money. For example, the most recent Supreme Court election in Wisconsin saw over \$51 million spent—more than half of it from outside the state. This threatens the very foundation of judicial independence and public trust.

Kansas must continue to protect the impartiality of its courts. I urge you to reject any proposals that would introduce partisan elections for our judiciary and instead uphold the system that has ensured fair, qualified, and independent justices for generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Please vote no on SCR1611.

Meghan Balkan  
Shawnee Kansas

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 13, 2025**  
**SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony**  
Ashley + Eric Barlow, Kansas residents + concerned parents  
ashsbarlow@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SCR 1611. This resolution threatens the integrity of Kansas' judicial system by injecting politics into our courts. The strength of our judiciary depends on justices and judges ruling based on the law—not political influence.

Kansas' Supreme Court has a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, free from partisan pressures or campaign contributions. Unlike the legislative and executive branches, the judicial branch must remain independent to uphold the rule of law fairly. Judicial decisions should be based on the Kansas Constitution, not political agendas.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission has protected this independence for decades. By selecting nominees based on merit, not money, the Commission ensures a highly qualified judiciary while preserving the separation of powers. In states where judges are elected, political spending has skyrocketed. In Wisconsin, over \$51 million was spent on a single Supreme Court race—half from outside the state. Kansas should not follow this path.

Our courts must remain fair, impartial, and above politics. The current system has served Kansas well, and we should not abandon it in favor of a system that prioritizes campaign dollars over judicial qualifications.

I urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and protect the integrity of our courts.

Ashley Barlow  
Kansas residents + concerned parents  
Overland Park, Kansas

Emily Bartlett

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is emily Bartlett and I am a voter in merriam, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

I oppose this bill and urge you to vote against it. This bill does not represent the will of Kansans.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Holly Bartlett

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/11/2025

I appreciate the chair and all of the committee members for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Holly Bartlett and I am a voter in Shawnee County/Topeka. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The judicial branch is such an important piece of our state government, and part of what makes them so vital in the system of checks and balances is the fact that they are nonpartisan. Judges have to be able to represent all Kansans in an impartial and fair manner, and there is nothing in this resolution that would improve on the system we already have. Campaigning will take time away that could be better spent, and the proposed system makes it more likely that seats on the supreme court can be bought. Even if they aren't sold to the highest bidder, public perception may be otherwise in the proposed system. Finally, with so much disinformation in recent years in our elections, it becomes increasingly more difficult for the general public to know who will be the best person for the job. I certainly want my justices picked based on merit, and that is best decided by the nominating commission. Let's stop fixing things that aren't broken, such as our system for picking supreme court justices.

Thank you so much for listening to my position on this bill. I would encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Anne Bauer

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing the time for me to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Anne Bauer and I am a voter in Kansas City, KS (Wyandotte County.) I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to SCR 1611, which seeks to change the current process of selecting Kansas Supreme Court justices. The process we have today is one that keeps politics out of our courts and ensures that our justices rule based on the law, not political influence.

First and foremost, there is no place for politics in our courts. Our justices must be free to rule on cases based solely on the law and the Kansas Constitution, not be swayed by political agendas. The current system, through the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, ensures that the selection process remains free from political pressure and outside influences. The Nominating Commission prevents shadow organizations from buying a seat on our highest court, preserving the integrity of the judiciary and upholding Kansas freedoms.

The judicial branch is separate from the legislative and executive branches, and it must remain so. A politicized judiciary undermines the trust and fairness that Kansans have in their courts. We need a court that can make decisions based on the law, without fear of political repercussions, and that will act in the best interest of all Kansans who appear before them.

The current process of nominating justices through the Nominating Commission has stood the test of time. It ensures that the justices who are selected are highly qualified and free from political interference. In contrast, moving to popular elections or Senate confirmations, as

proposed by SCR 1611, would inject partisanship into the process and risk overwhelming our court system with money and political influence.

In other states, where Supreme Court justices are elected, we've seen the destructive consequences of political influence in the selection process. For example, in Wisconsin, more than \$51 million was spent on a recent Supreme Court election, with much of it coming from outside the state. This shows the dangers of turning judicial elections into partisan races driven by outside interests, which can distort the impartiality of the court.

For the sake of Kansas' judiciary and the principles of fairness and impartiality, I urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and preserve the strength of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission.

Thank you for your consideration and, again, I encourage you to all vote NO on SCR 1611.

Camin Bell

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Camin Bell and I am a voter in Johnson County/ Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I believe it is important to have impartial Judges on the KS Supreme Court. We need to keep the supreme court nominating commission in place. NO DIRECT ELECTIONS!!!

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote NO of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Elizabeth Benditt

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Elizabeth Benditt and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 161.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SCR 1611. This resolution is an unnecessary overreach that threatens the rights and freedoms of Kansans. It does not reflect the values of our state, nor does it serve the best interests of its people.

Kansans have already spoken on this issue, and reintroducing it is a waste of time and taxpayer resources. I urge you to reject SCR 1611 and focus on policies that truly benefit our communities—like strengthening education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.



**March 11, 2025**

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**

**NAME:** Erica Benson

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** ericawbenson@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611 (SCR 1611)

**HEARING DATE:** March 13,, 2025

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written

Dear Chair and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611 (SCR 1611), which proposes to replace Kansas' current merit-based Supreme Court selection process with a partisan election system. This radical change poses a serious threat to the independence of our judiciary and jeopardizes the future of Kansans.

In Wisconsin, Supreme Court races have become highly politicized, with record-breaking campaign spending. The 2019 election saw over \$8 million spent on advertisements and campaign efforts. The growing influence of outside political groups has fueled concerns that judicial decisions are increasingly shaped by partisan agendas rather than legal reasoning. The court became deeply divided along ideological lines, with decisions often mirroring political party platforms rather than impartial interpretation of the law. Ohio's history of judicial elections has revealed voter confusion. Many voters skip judicial races on the ballot, while those who participate often rely on party labels or name recognition rather than qualifications. This has led to judges being elected with limited experience, undermining the credibility and effectiveness of the courts.

Kansas has long benefited from a nonpartisan, merit-based system for appointing Supreme Court justices. This system ensures that justices are selected based on their qualifications, experience, and judicial temperament, rather than political affiliation or campaign fundraising abilities. SCR 1611 would dismantle this fair and effective process and expose our highest court to the risks of partisan influence.

The introduction of political elections for Kansas Supreme Court justices could have disastrous consequences. Under this new system, judicial candidates would need to campaign, solicit donations, and publicly affiliate with political parties. This heightened political pressure threatens to compromise impartial decision-making and turn our courts into battlegrounds for special interests rather than protectors of constitutional rights.

One of the most significant risks posed by SCR 1611 relates to public education. The Kansas Supreme Court has played a crucial role in ensuring that our schools receive adequate funding. In the landmark *Gannon v. Kansas* case, the Court held the Legislature accountable for its constitutional obligation to fund public schools equitably and adequately. By introducing politics into our judiciary, SCR 1611 creates the potential for future judicial decisions to be swayed by partisan agendas rather than legal principles, potentially undermining essential educational funding protections.

Moreover, eliminating the Supreme Court Nominating Commission removes a vital safeguard against cronyism and unqualified judicial appointments. The Commission's role in screening candidates based on merit has historically helped preserve public confidence in the impartiality of the Kansas Supreme Court. SCR 1611's proposed system opens the door for unqualified individuals to gain judicial positions through name recognition or political connections rather than legal expertise.

I strongly urge you to reject SCR 1611 and protect the integrity of Kansas' judiciary. Ensuring that our courts remain impartial, nonpartisan, and focused solely on the rule of law is essential to maintaining a fair and functional democracy. The current merit-based system has served Kansas well, and there is no justifiable reason to replace it with a partisan election model that threatens judicial independence and public education.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Partisan elections increase campaign spending, favoring candidates backed by wealthy special interests.**
- **Public perception of judicial impartiality declines when judges are seen as politicians in robes.**
- **Qualified judicial candidates may be discouraged from running due to the political nature of campaigns.**

Kansas' current merit-based system has protected judicial independence by focusing on qualifications rather than political influence. The experiences of these other states offer a cautionary tale about the risks of replacing a proven, fair system with a politicized election process.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask you to stand with Kansans in opposing SCR 1611.

Sincerely,  
Erica Benson

Overland Park, KS

Charissa Bertels

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Charissa Bertels and I am a voter in Riley County, Manhattan, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe it is extremely important to avoid politicizing our Supreme Court. Recent examples include the current race in Wisconsin being influenced by billionaire Elon Musk and the 2022 race in Ohio where hundreds of thousands of dollars from out-of-state special interest groups poured in to buy candidates a seat. Kansans do not want people like Elon Musk deciding our state's issues by buying our Supreme Court.

I also believe it is painfully obvious that this is Kris Kobach's blatant attempt to reverse Kansans clear and historic votes on reproductive freedom. Our current system allows for a panel of knowledgeable scholars to help make these decisions and the voting public is able to weigh in on these appointments after a year. The public will still be heard but I hope you hear us now when we say we do not want dark money and special interest groups to override the wishes of Kansans.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage all of you to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Margaret Bhattarai

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Margaret Bhattarai and I am a voter in Topeka. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I am in strong opposition of SCR 1611 for one main reason. Judges, by definition, are nonpartisan. It is undeniable that every person, no matter their profession will have certain biases towards one political ideology, however due to their rule within the constitution and our current mode of government, judges only can do their job if they are not beholden to anyone but the law. By allowing them to be elected and run campaigns, they become an extension of the political machine that allows money rather than policy to determine elections. While campaigns of state and local officials are meant to be strategic and calculated, they are without the branch of government that calls for the people's will to decide. Judges' role is to be the opposite voice and determine if and when an elected official has overstepped or if private citizens are not in accordance with our constitution. If they are elected, there will no longer be an incentive to remain as impartial as possible but to follow the whims of the political moment, making decisions that will keep them on the seat rather than those that protect the law.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to speak and share my perspective as a lifelong Kansan. I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Allyson Bittner

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and members of the committee, I appreciate the time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Allyson Bittner and I'm a voter in Shawnee, in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I am grateful for the Kansas tradition of being a Free State that values the opinions of its constituents. This Bill gives too much power and consideration to the will of our AG, and I believe these powers should remain in place as written in our constitution.

Again, thank you for taking this into consideration, and I encourage you to vote NO on passage of this bill. Thank you!

Kristen Blackton

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Committee Members,

Thank you for reading my testimony today. My name is Kristen Blackton, and I am a Kansas resident, a parent, and a former educator living in Shawnee. I am writing to urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

If SCR 1611 was to pass and our constitution amended, then it would open the doors to the corruption of our Kansas Supreme Court. We know that ALL elections have become partisan, and we also know that many dark money groups pour money into big and small elections. This lays the groundwork for corruption, as judges will be beholden to the dark money that helps elect them, rather than to the law and the constitution.

We currently have a bipartisan Supreme Court that has been appointed through a rigorous process that has been praised by other states in the union. They have used their expertise and allegiance to the constitution to protect rights of Kansans and ensure that our children have an education and a bright future. I am the parent of a young daughter. I would love to see her grow up and choose to stay in Kansas, and it is only with the decisions of the Supreme Court that have ensured her rights and mandated funding for her education that I feel comfortable encouraging her to do just that.

I know that you care about our constitutional rights. Allowing dark money to flow into the state via justice elections is not a way to protect those. We have seen upwards of \$30 million and counting poured into the Wisconsin Supreme Court race this year. Why would we want that in Kansas? Wouldn't that money be better spent helping others?

Thank you for your time. I urge you to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611.

Shae Blevins

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1161

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Shae Blevins and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Kansans across the political spectrum believe in the rule of law and its checks and balances. Were one to be broken such as with SCR 1161, the rule of law would be able to be bought. It is not Kansan, nor is it constitutional, to allow society as a whole to be bought. We are citizens of a great nation. We deserve free and fair justice.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Jessica Bright

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries & members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Jessica Bright and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Kansas's current merit based, nominating commission process for selecting Supreme Court Justices must be preserved. This non-partisan process prevents our Supreme Court elections from becoming money wasting affairs, dominated by special interest groups from outside of Kansas.

A three year study from the Brennan Center for Justice backs this up, but stating that a publicly accountable process from an independent nominating committee is the key to retaining fair and impartial state supreme courts.

Kansas voters currently have the ability to voice their opinion of a Kansas Supreme Court Justice in the retention votes which are currently conducted after a judge's first year on the court, and then again every six years after.

In closing, it is clear that our current Supreme Court Justice nomination process is the best practice and to change that would not be in the best interests of Kansas.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts on this bill and I encourage you to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611.

Thank you.



Lorel Brown

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/11/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Lorel Brown and I am a voter in Overland Park/Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe in fair and impartial courts, and I would like Kansas to not allow direct elections of Supreme Court judges as I believe it would allow more opportunity to influence judges during the election process. Please keep the selection of judges impartial and vote no so we can stay with our current system.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

**TO: Rep. Susan Humphries, Chair**  
**House Committee on Judiciary**  
**RE: SCR 1611 – Written Only – Oppose**  
**FR: Connie Brown Collins**  
**Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County**  
**DT: March 12, 2025**

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I'd like to thank the committee for providing this opportunity to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Connie Brown Collins, Founder/Executive Director of Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. I live in Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas. Our organization hosts regular informational and educational meetings and events on voting and human rights (including women's reproductive rights), public education, and other pertinent issues in collaboration with numerous participating organizations and committed individuals, both from Wyandotte and Johnson Counties. Additionally, I am a former teacher of special education preschool in Shawnee Mission, KS.

I write in opposition to SCR 1611 for two reasons. First, because it would allow an overhaul of the court system, ostensibly to undo the Court's bodily autonomy ruling that allows citizens to make their own healthcare decisions. This would undoubtedly impact women's reproductive rights.

Second, SCR 1611 would eliminate the only system that has forced the Kansas Legislature to equitably and adequately fund public education. Should the amendment pass, public education will eventually face the same cuts that took place during the Brownback years, and we will no longer have a fair and independent judiciary to challenge these reckless actions.

Over the past 15 years, there have been numerous attempts to change the selection, retention and jurisdiction of our courts as the legislature has continued to lose school funding cases. Efforts to change the selection of Supreme Court Justices reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of the courts and a desire to open our judicial branch to politicization and litmus tests. Part of the purpose of courts is to protect fundamental rights and values even when doing so is not "popular."

If passed, this amendment would force Kansas judges to campaign like politicians, seeking support from wealthy donors. The rule of law would be undermined, replaced by decisions influenced by those who financed the verdicts. Television, social media, and print media would be flooded with millions of dollars in attack ads. Partisan political

megadonors, consultants, and special interest groups would gain control over the Kansas Supreme Court, and judicial independence would become a thing of the past.

Moreover, the popular election of justices is not working in other states. In Wisconsin, more than \$51 million was spent on a recent Supreme Court election with \$45 million of that in the form of dark money from outside of Wisconsin. We need fair and impartial courts in Kansas that will decide cases based on the law and not based on loyalty to political donors or fear of being post-carded out of office for doing their jobs.

The truth is, Kansas already has a system that works. Judges are selected through a merit-based process. A nonpartisan commission, representing all corners of the state, vets candidates and forwards the three most qualified individuals to the governor. The governor, elected by all Kansans, then appoints the best candidate to the bench.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote against SCR 1611 in order to ensure that Kansas Supreme Court justices are appointed based on an unbiased, non-political merit system which is an effective and time-tested process that has helped insulate judicial selection in Kansas from financial and political pressures that endanger fair and impartial courts. Thank you again for providing this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

*Connie Brown Collins*

Connie Brown Collins  
Founder/Executive Director  
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County

Tammy J. Bruegger

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

written only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Tammy Bruegger and I am a voter in Johnson County Kansas and Overland Park, KS I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

Dear Representatives,

I would like to provide testimony for SCR 6211. Please vote no for HB 6211 which will change the Kansas Constitution and how judges are chosen for the Kansas Supreme Court. By making the process into an election, this will politicize the selection of judges in Kansas. Currently the Nominating Commission of knowledgeable people select candidates after extensive review of their background, experience and job skills for the job, as well as an interview. Then the three top candidates are sent to the Governor for selection. This method is recommended by the Brennan Center for Justice as part of best practice after a 3 year study. The process protects the selection from being politicized and paid for by wealthy people and organizations through donations to a campaign. There is no place for politics in the court to keep it unbiased and objective to rule based on the law and the Constitution. This will allow for rulings that consider the best interest of all Kansans not political agendas.

In addition, the election process has not worked in other states. In states where elections are held for Supreme Court seats, elections often become partisan and result in millions of dollars being poured into these races. In a recent Supreme Court election in Wisconsin, over \$51 million was spent on a Supreme Court seat, with over half of that coming from outside the state. The current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court based on merit. In summary, the Supreme Court Nominating Commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers for objective rulings based on the Constitution and not politics. I ask you to please vote "no" to SCR 6211 to protect our judicial system.

Thank you for hearing my objections and thoughts on SCR 1611. I encourage you to all vote "no" to the passage of SCR 1611, Thank you, Tammy J. Bruegger

Gregory Bryant

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Thank you, Chair Humphries and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to comment on this issue of a constitutional amendment. I'm Greg Bryant, from Robinson, Kansas, and I encourage the Committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

SCR 1611 is not in the citizens' interests. It would replace our current constitutional method of expert legal minds advising the governor in an atmosphere outside the range of partisan campaigning. The general electorate of Kansas elects the governor, and the general electorate votes on Justice retention. This process serves all Kansans.

Because the present composition of our legislature does not precisely and directly represent the general electorate, but a politically selected portion, SCR 1611 would reduce the political independence of an entire branch of our government and rob Kansans of one of the strongest protections of our liberties. Justices would be not only allowed, but effectively required to jostle with political organizations, raise money, campaign, and otherwise waste their time and attention on the worst aspects of Kansas politics, when their training and profession fit them for higher work, guarding the rule of constitutional law.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts. The Supreme Court selection and retention process doesn't need fixing. Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Kellie Bubeck

Private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kellie Bubeck, and I am a Kansas resident and voter. I am writing to respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

There is no place for politics in our courts, and this proposal threatens the independence of our judicial system. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law, not political influence.

The current process for selecting Supreme Court justices through the Nominating Commission has served Kansans well by preventing political interference and ensuring that the highest court remains impartial. The Nominating Commission process is critical to maintaining a fair and unbiased judiciary that upholds the Kansas Constitution and protects our freedoms.

The judicial branch must remain distinct from the legislative and executive branches, and subjecting justices to popular elections or Senate confirmations injects unnecessary politics into our Court. Elections for judges in other states, like the recent \$51 million race for a Wisconsin Supreme Court seat, show how detrimental political influence can be on the integrity of the judiciary.

The current Nominating Commission system is the best way to ensure that only qualified, nonpartisan justices serve on the Kansas Supreme Court. Let's keep it that way. Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kellie Bubeck

Kansas resident



Laurie Callender

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Laurie Callender and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

I believe that the judicial branch should be different from the legislative and executive branches of government. Justices have a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them. Justices should not engage in political activity. They must have greater protections from improper influence than any other constitutional officers.

Thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you

Lindsay Callender

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Lindsay Callender and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

This opens the door for dark money to flow into our state, diluting the voice of Kansan voters. Our system allows for Kansan voters to be heard during retention votes, and no Justice has ever lost a retention vote. We are making our voices heard every time we participate in these votes.

These Justices should be decided by the most qualified and educated individuals, because at the end of the day... it is a job. We want "everyday" representatives in the statehouse, because it makes us feel more connected to the political process; like regular Kansans are getting a say through representatives that look and live like us. However, the balance in that system lies with the courts to check the legality and constitutionality of the policies that are implemented by our representatives. That requires a specific knowledge of the law, and an individual who can leave politics at the door when ruling on arguments. That is a unique position and education that only those who have walked the life, or are incredibly knowledgeable can weigh in on. The general public of Kansas does not know the qualifications and characteristics that are needed for this position. Striking this process takes out the buffer that is needed to keep our precarious checks and balances system in place.

Finally, if candidates are focused on ruling certain cases to appease their donors for the upcoming election, we have essentially hung a "for sale" sign on the outside of the Supreme Court.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

OPP.SCR1611.CAPSON.03.13.25

**March 12, 2025**

**H.Judiciary@house.ks.gov**

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**

**NAME:** Alice J. Capson

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS;** capsonks@aol.com: **OPPONENT**

**BILL NUMBER:** SCR 1611, Constitutional Amendment changing method of selecting Supreme Court Judges

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** WRITTEN

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SCR 1611 which would change the method of selecting Supreme Court Judges from the current one of merit selection to election. I think the merit selection process has served our state well because we have more qualified judges who can focus on fairly and accurately applying the law rather than raising enormous sums for re-election. The merit selection process leads to judges who are not beholden to donors and who are more likely to be fair. Our current system lessens the involvement of partisan politics or the shenanigans that motivated the use of the merit selection system in the first place, the Kansas Triple Play Scandal. We've seen that in some other states, to the detriment of the courts. Our Kansas Supreme Court should not be subject to influence by out-of-state organizations and people who have ample funds! In addition, many highly qualified people would not step up to be candidates if it involved being elected, and that would be a loss to Kansas.

I think it is important that justices understand the law, and having a nonpartisan commission with representatives from each Congressional district, including both lawyers and non-lawyers assures that final candidates will have passed muster and likely are respected by the varied members of the committee. It is also more likely that candidates are from across the state. Only after the committee members' scrutiny are three candidates presented to the governor.

Though some lower-level judges may be elected in Kansas, the Supreme Court warrants special consideration. The vast majority of cases (over 90%) which were appealed to the US Supreme Court were not taken for further review by that Federal court which indicates that good decisions are being made in Kansas.

We have an excellent system in place that has served us well. Please don't change it!

Thank you for **voting NO ON SCR 1611.**

Alice Capson

Amy Carter

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 1611, which proposes a constitutional amendment to fundamentally alter the selection process for Kansas Supreme Court justices.

Under our current system, the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission ensures that justices are chosen based on merit, legal expertise, and judicial temperament, rather than political influence or campaign fundraising ability. By abolishing this commission and moving to direct, partisan elections, SCR 1611 would introduce political considerations into our highest court in a way that undermines the very nature of an impartial judiciary.

Kansas has long avoided the problems seen in other states where judicial elections require candidates to raise significant sums of money, often from interest groups with vested stakes in judicial outcomes. The introduction of partisan elections, along with the removal of restrictions on political activity for justices, would erode public trust in the judicial system. Instead of deciding cases solely on the law and the constitution, justices would be placed in a system where electoral considerations—and the influence of political donors—could affect their rulings.

Unlike legislators and governors, justices do not represent constituencies; they are not tasked with enacting policies or advocating for political positions. Their role is to interpret and apply the law fairly, without regard to public opinion or partisan pressures. The protections that currently exist ensure that justices can focus on their constitutional duty to serve all Kansans impartially. SCR 1611 would diminish these protections, making our judiciary more susceptible to external pressures and less accountable to the principles of justice.

I urge this committee to reject SCR 1611 and to preserve a judicial selection process that prioritizes fairness, independence, and integrity over partisanship.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kathryn Carter-Brown

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I thank you for giving me the time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Kate Carter-Brown and I am a voter in Roeland Park. I am writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

Whenever we consider making changes to the constitution of our state we are making a significant decision that impacts each and every member of our state and our individual communities.

How our judges are selected has significant impact on many decisions and sectors of the state of Kansas. A Nomination Commission helps to recognize and elevate judges that best, and impartially, interpret the law across the state.

While I find the selection of judges to be extremely important, I find it even more imperative that we keep politics out of this process. Judges have a unique position within the government to objectively protect the legal systems within the state. As Kansans we don't have to worry about political bodies buying into our Supreme Court system.

The systems of Kansas, particularly the school and medical systems, need this protection now, more than ever. We must defend protection for all Kansans and keep political players out of our courts.

Again, I thank you for hearing this testimony and my thoughts on the bill. I would like to ask each of you to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Chloe Chaffin

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Thank you Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee. I am writing today to ask that you please vote no on SCR 1611.

Everything is hyper partisan and polarized these days. This is true all over the nation, and it is certainly true within the Kansas legislature. There is no reason our courts should get dragged into it as well. As it stands, a bipartisan and merit based selection process is already used to make sure we turn down the temperature on politics and that fact finding wins the day in the courtroom. If SCR 1611 is passed, it opens the Supreme Court up to influence by big money donors who will fundamentally change the interest of the bench from the best interest of Kansans to the interest of the wealthiest PACs.

Again, I encourage you to vote no and protect judicial legitimacy, thank you.

Connor Chaffin

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to share my opinion on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Connor Chaffin and I am a voter from Olathe, and today I am writing to encourage the committee to vote no on SCR 1611.

The Independence of our judiciary is the foundation on which our justice system is predicated. If we have a Supreme Court in Kansas that is beholden to the whims of the public and the political system, the ability to hand down controversial decisions that are essential to upholding our rights will be greatly diminished. While at the federal, not state level, no court case better illuminates the value of an independent judiciary than the United States Supreme Court Case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. This landmark decision was absolutely instrumental in protecting the right to equality of all Americans and Kansans. The ability of the court to hand down a decision that was so controversial in its time would have been hampered or prevented altogether if the justices had to campaign for re-election from that same populous who disagreed so starkly with their decision. It is precisely because the justices were not answerable to public opinion that they had the ability to make the right--and not necessarily the popular--decision that they did. *Brown v. Board of Education* is one of the hundreds of similar cases that have percolated through the court system at the federal and state level where the legal and moral decision is not the one most supported by voters at the time. In Kansas, if the justices who serve on our Supreme Court are elected through partisan elections, their hands will be tied by the threat of losing an election when it comes time for them to make the types of difficult decisions that often define and exemplify the strength of our legal tradition. Their discretion is pivotal to a fair and equal justice system. I strongly urge the members of the committee to not diminish that discretion by passing this legislation.

As a senior in high school, I often look ahead to what I plan to do with my life. I hope to work in the legal profession and to participate in and to uphold a free, fair, and just legal system. As such, I feel it is my obligation to do that work today by sharing with you my feelings towards this amendment, and encourage you to uphold the existing legal system and Supreme Court that make Kansas a truly Free State.



Once again, I sincerely thank you all for receiving my story and thoughts on this legislation, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 13, 2025**  
**SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony**

Jennifer Cheek, private citizen  
jencheek77@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

Keep politics out of our Courts. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution. The judicial branch is different from the legislative and executive branches. It must be free from political influence. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, not political agendas.

The current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. The Supreme Court Nominating Commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers. Popular elections inject politics into our Court system. The Nominating Commission has kept politics out of our Supreme Court.

In states where elections are held for Supreme Court seats, elections often become partisan and result in millions of dollars being poured into these races. In a recent Supreme Court election in Wisconsin, over \$51 million was spent on a Supreme Court seat, with over half of that coming from outside the state.

Please vote no on SCR 1611.

Jennifer Cheek  
Overland Park, KS

Michael J. Chisam

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Michael Chisam and I am a voter in Reno County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

I am deeply concerned that passage of this bill enables the court system to be bought. The current system of selection ensures that strong candidates are nominated based on their credentials, not their ability to raise campaign funds. The current process of selection provides confidence in the court system and provides a barrier to corruption. The Supreme Court Justices should be accountable to the law, not their donors! Please do not undermine the court system - we need a branch of government that truly works for the people and is committed to upholding the law!!

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you!

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**

**March 13, 2025**

**SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony**

Anna Clark, Kansas citizen

aclark320@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

There is no place for politics in the courts. Kansas has selected judges based on merit for over 60 years, ensuring all Kansans have either voices heard, regardless of political affiliation, and without fear of retaliation from opposing parties. I urge you to consider what this can create, and look to other states that have imposed this and its consequences. Please continue to keep politics out of our courts.

Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Thank you.

Anna Clark

Leawood

Elizabeth Cole

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Elizabeth Cole and I am a voter in Lawrence, in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

SCR 1611 will replace the merit-based system for selecting Supreme Court judges with partisan elections. Introducing politics into our courts could be detrimental to things like:

reproductive rights

public education funding

voting rights

Our current impartial Kansas Supreme Court has protected all of these issues in recent rulings.

A merit-based system for selecting judges is critical. The non-partisan Nominating Commission prevents outside actors from influencing our court system.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Iva Lee Colgan, Ed.D.

I am giving testimony on behalf of myself as a private citizen.

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Dr. Iva Lee Colgan and I am a voter from Olathe in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I oppose this bill because it would trade in positions earned by merit to positions possibly earned by money! Judges should be free to make decisions based on the law and not be beholden to any groups or individuals who may have contributed to their campaign. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, not political agendas.

We have seen recently what money and power can do to influence elections. I do not believe that the motivation behind such a bill is an opportunity for greater involvement by Kansans. I see it as a way to change the court and jeopardize some things important to Kansans - public education, abortion rights, and voting rights, just to name a few. I was a public school educator for 40 years and want to keep Kansas public schools strong. Kansans surprised everyone with the vote to protect abortion rights and this could be an attempt to run around that vote. As a woman, I am concerned by attempts I see to make it harder to vote.

Please consider how this is working (or not working) in other states that utilize a voting system.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote NO of the passage of SCR 1611. I believe Kansas is currently utilizing a best practices system. Thank you.

Colleen Connor

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I appreciate being able to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Colleen Connor and I am a voter in Lenexa (Johnson County). I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I am against this bill because our courts, especially our Supreme Court, must be nonpartisan. Our judges must rule fairly for all Kansans without partisan influences and concerns. The nonpartisan, merit-based appointment of judges has worked for Kansas for years. Why mess with a system that is working? Justices should not be allowed to enter into political activity. Partisan elections will lead to courts who cannot rule impartially.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts on this bill. Please vote no on SCR 1611. Thank you.

Emily Cooling

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Emily Cooling and I am a voter in Johnson County, Mission Hills, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

Kansans clearly chose to support reproductive freedom and protect individual freedoms and choice. This will take that decision away from all of us and allow the judiciary to overturn the will of the people. We do not want this!

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.



Kathleen Cooper

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Thank you for letting me share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Kathleen and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the computer to vote NO on SCR 1611.

This bill is wrong and unfair. It would bring an injustice to the decisions already made by Kansas.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts on this bill. I strongly encourage you all to vote NO of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you and have a nice day.

March 12, 2025

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

**NAME:** Charles L Cordray  
**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen and Voter  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** [chuckcordray85@gmail.com](mailto:chuckcordray85@gmail.com)  
**MAILING ADDRESS:** 11520 Canterbury Cir, Leawood KS 66211  
**BILL NUMBER:** SCR 1611  
**PROPONENT, OPPONENT or NEUTRAL:** OPPONENT  
**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only

Dear Members of the Committee:

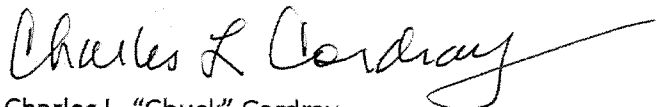
As an American citizen, I value the integrity of our judiciary system. As our government becomes more and more overtly political, the non-partisan nature of some essential functions of our government become more crucial than effort to protect the fragile workings of our democracy.

Our current system of selecting judges on merit, from informed individuals participating, works well and has served the state to our betterment for over 60 years.

The current proposed bill will politicize the judiciary, allowing dark money from multiple sources to infiltrate the system. This is not furthering the cause of democracy. It is aligning judges with specific monied interests rather than the well-being of the state of Kansas and its citizens.

Having failed to pass Amendment 2, the legislature is making a transparent effort to change the system of selecting judges so they can help influence judges to vote their way on specific issues.

The people have spoken. When will our legislature choose to listen to us? The responsible and honorable action is to vote NO on moving this bill forward.



Charles L. "Chuck" Cordray

1152 Canterbury Cir, Leawood KS 66211

**As a resident of House District 30**, I am reaching out today to strongly state my OPPOSITION to SCR1611, a bill that would put a constitutional amendment on the August 4th, 2026 ballot to require direct election of our Supreme Court Justices, which would abolish our merit based selection system that has been in place for 6 decades and seriously jeopardize the independence of Kansas's judicial branch. Kansans of all political leanings (Republican, Democrat and Unaffiliated), demographics groups, and economic/social status are proud of and rely on the Sunflower State's history of true nonpartisanship in the service of the independence of the three branches of our state's government. Justice, in particular, must be removed from partisanship.

Again, I oppose SCR1611.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Evie Craig  
20907 Whispering Dr, Lenexa, KS 66220  
agirlcould@gmail.com  
913.706.1469