

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Amity Dannefer, private citizen

amityfile@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers.

The judicial branch is different from the legislative and executive branches. It must be free from political influence.

Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Amity Dannefer

Overland Park KS

Cynthia Darting

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 Cynthia Darting and I am a voter in Topeka/Shawnee County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

Please do not politicize the courts in Kansas! The majority of the voters have spoken on abortion - please listen to the majority!!

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.

Kathleen Davis

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service to our great state of Kansas, and thank you for the opportunity to present my concerns about SCR 1611. I strongly encourage the committee to vote know on this bill.

There is no place for politics in the courts. I am deeply concerned about the current discussion in our state house regarding changing the merit based selection of judges for the court.

The current process of selecting judges in Kansas has stood the test of time, and ensures that we have qualified nominees for the Court. Popular elections and Senate confirmations inject politics into our Court system. The Nominating Commission has kept our courts free of political influence and continues to be the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers.

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 and protect our Kansas freedoms. In Kansas, the Nominating Commission prevents shadow organizations from buying a Supreme Court seat. The Supreme Court has a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them, not concern themselves with political influences.

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. For example, 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.

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

Sheila Delich

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

No

I support public education and women's rights

Thank you

Rachel Dietzel

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts in SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Rachel Dietzel and I am a voter in Johnson County/Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Justices have a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them. They must have greater protections from improper influence than any other constitutional officers. The proposed changes in Kansas's SCR 1611 are inappropriate.

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.

ERIN ANNETTE DIX

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Erin Dix and I am a voter in Allen County, Iola, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Blocking the passage of SCR 1611 matters to me because this change would turn our judicial branch into a partisan nightmare. We would lose faith in our judges and would always know that Republicans did this to push their agendas rather than appoint judges who are fair and uphold the constitution of our great state. Many Kansans lack confidence in the government, and now you want to change the constitution to fit your agenda as if it is the right one for everyone in the state. Why? Why are you determined to undermine the judicial branch of our government?

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

Anh Do

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for considering my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Anh and I am a voter in Wichita. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I began participating in and following Kansas elections and legislative processes as soon as I turned 18 in 2014. I was inspired by my AP Government teacher and Journalism teacher at Wichita Southeast High School to be politically involved because as a bisexual woman and a Vietnamese immigrant, my identity has always been and will always be threatened in this country. The 2016 presidential election further revealed the fragility of my rights to exist.

However, despite my worries, I found comfort in my AP Government teacher's unshaken belief in the checks and balances system of the legislative, judicial, and the executive branches at the federal AND state levels. We could always trust that a merit-selected and impartial judicial branch will act justly based on facts and the letter of the law, not on the will of their political donors. A partisan elected judge who must campaign and fundraise for elections will rule in accordance with wealthy lobbyists and donors - we all know I am referring to the Koch family.

In 2019, the Kansas Supreme Court enshrined abortion rights in the Kansas constitution. I felt immense pride in our state, and also a renewed trust in the checks and balances system. In 2022, I was further inspired by Kansas voters coming together in a landslide vote to protect abortion rights. Since then, the super majority conservative legislative body and Kris Kobach, fueled by radical right-wing money, has been working non-stop to overthrow the will of Kansans and the impartiality of our court.

The passage of SCR 1611 will erode our trust in the judicial branch and will contribute to the removal of my rights to live and exist in Kansas and as a woman and an immigrant.

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

Natalie Dorsey

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 Natalie Dorsey and I am a voter in the city of Leawood, Johnson County, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The current system for appointing Supreme Court Justices in Kansas keeps partisan politics out of the court, and it should stay that way.

This proposed amendment will replace merit-based experts with extreme politicians and special interest groups. We should keep the courts non-partisan and ensure experts, not politicians, make these calls.

Switching to partisan elections for state Supreme Court justices will not actually give power to the people; it will give power to those with the most money. One need only to look to the state of Ohio which switched to partisan Supreme Court elections in 2022, and hundreds of thousands of dollars from out-of-state special interest groups poured into Ohio to buy their preferred candidate's success. This is also playing out in Wisconsin as I write this letter. We should keep special interest and dark money groups out of our judicial system.

Let us be clear, the extremists backing this amendment are only trying to remake the court so they can ban abortion without exceptions in Kansas. Attorney General Kobach gave an entire speech arguing that the court's decision to uphold abortion protections proves a change in the system is needed, making the intentions behind this amendment crystal clear. We must protect the right of all Kansans to make personal decisions without government getting involved. Attorney General Kobach is only trying to overhaul the court because he does not like that they

don't bend to his will. Kobach has openly stated that the makeup of the court makes it "very difficult" for him to win cases and advance his preferred policies.

One of the proudest votes I have ever cast was to vote "no" on the proposed amendment and keep abortion safe and legal in the State of Kansas. I was overjoyed that evening with the news the amendment was soundly rejected.

The people of Kansas have already made their voices loud and clear in August 2022, where voters overwhelmingly rejected efforts to strip away reproductive rights in Kansas. Despite this decisive outcome, these current efforts to politicize the court seek to undermine the will of the people, with one singular goal in mind.

That August 2022 vote made clear Kansans do not want politicians interfering with their personal healthcare decisions, and they have explicitly said so at the ballot box. I urge you to respect the mandate given by the people. Continuing this relentless pursuit of abortion restrictions will not only erode public trust in the legislature but also further divide our communities.

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.

David Downing

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Committee members, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts about SCR 1611 today. My name is David Downing and I am a voter in Wichita in Sedgwick County. I'm writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The passage of SCR 1611 would mean the end of judicial independence in our state. Allowing partisan elections for Supreme Court justices would pollute our justice system with monied interests and essentially sell off court seats to the highest bidder. In our Republican system, the Courts were designed to be as removed from political pressure as possible in order to allow for trust in their rulings. Removing this precedent in our state opens the floodgates to the same kind of issues with money in politics that Citizens United and other loosening of campaign finance laws has created at the national level. I'm a history teacher, and one of the things we try to teach students is the importance of separation of powers and the problems of money infecting the political system. From the Spoils System of the early 19th century, to the encroachment of Oligarchs like Elon Musk today, we have ample evidence of how the rich can use their wealth to bend society to their own whims, often at the cost of the most vulnerable. Courts exist to protect the rights of the weak and prevent the overreach of the government and private actors. If the justice system is able to be bought, we will no longer have reason to trust their rulings or their legitimacy, and Kansans will be harmed in the long run. We know that there are groups that would like to remove civil rights from immigrants, harm women with unsafe and non-scientific abortion bans, and remove funding from education that benefits the vast majority of kids in our state. Passing these changes would amount to handing the reins of our justice system over to whomever has the most cash to spend. It subverts the very purpose of the courts and of our Constitutional protections, and must be opposed.

Again, thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony. Please vote no on the passage of this dangerous bill. Thank you.

Stacy L Doyle

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and committee members thank you so much for giving me the time to share my thought on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Stacy Doyle and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote know on SCR 1611.

I believe passing this legislation will inhibit our judicial system in Kansas from working in a fair, non-partisan way. It will allow our courts to become politicized in a way that is not right for Kansans.

Thank you for your dedication to our communities and upholding our government. I strongly encourage you to vote no to maintain the sanctity of our courts.

March 12, 2025

SCR 1611

Proponent Written-only Testimony for hearing 3/13/2025

Conferee : Dale Enyart

Representing : Self

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I'm providing written-only Proponent testimony for SCR1611. I ask you to support SCR1611. It gives the power of selecting Supreme Court Justices to We The People, as it should always have been...rather than a group of candidates being selected by a committee comprised mainly of members of the bar for the Governor to choose from. The current form is nonsensical and nonrepresentative, in fact it is the ultimate in citizen disenfranchisement. I would argue that it's current form is a prime example of "the fox guarding the henhouse". To be brutally honest, there is no viable reason to not support SCR1611...IT MERELY PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR KANSANS TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES AT THE BALLOT BOX. That is the RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE. Opposing SCR1611 will tell voters that you do not trust the judgement and discernment of the very people that elected YOU.

I implore you to be a solutionary and strongly support SCR1611.

Thank you,

Dale Enyart

Caroline Faulkender

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 Caroline Faulkender, and I am a voter in Olathe. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I almost all of my life, I have lived in Kansas, where we don't have to worry about shadow organizations trying to buy a Justice of our Supreme Court. For three years, 2017-2020, my husband's job moved us to Minnesota, where we learned a lot about the situation in Wisconsin, which has only gotten worse since. I don't want Kansas to follow that pattern. I want to be able to trust that judges are following the law and making fair and balanced decisions, not the decisions their campaign donors expect them to make. We cannot open the door for billionaires, whether Elon Musk or George Soros, to essentially buy justices. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, not political agendas.

I am a former community journalist who worked to inform voters leading up to elections for 13 years, and I am currently editor for a legal marketing company, not to mention a voter who has voted in every election for the last 25 years. I believe voters are already overwhelmed with information when faced with selecting the best candidate, and the general population is too unfamiliar with the complex legal and court processes, making them ill-equipped to make the appropriate selections that the panel members in our current merit-based system are equipped to make. A study conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice also supports our current system.

I thank you for considering my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611.

Olivia Favreau

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Thank you committee members for giving me the time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Olivia Favreau and I am a voter in Westwood Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SCR 1611

Both sides of the aisle know one thing to be true, and that is adding money to politics has fundamentally changed this country. Wisconsin is currently in one of the most expensive political races ever and it is a judiciary race. I do not want money to continue to influence what is and is not law in my state. Judges are here to interpret our state constitution, not alter rulings because their benefactor told them too. I do not trust that the corrupting influence of billionaires will not insert itself into state politics. Judges are not meant to be politicized, judges make rule of law decisions for all of us, not just republicans or democrats. It is unclear why this bill has been authored other than to fuel corruption in our government. Will you be able to tell your constituents why judges are being made to be political pawns without referencing any rulings? There is only one ruling that I can think of that has been controversial in the legislative chamber enough to prompt this response. And it is one that time and time again Kansans continue to support. The right to abortion care in this state. Why politicize an office that does not need it? Other than to push your own agenda and make it into law why ignoring your constituents. It is incredibly transparent and disappointing.

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

Ann Fell

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 Ann Fell and I am a voter from Winfield, in Cowley County, Ks. I am writing today to encourage the committee to VOTE NO on SCR 1611.

We need a Court system that can make decisions fairly, regardless of politics, to uphold our Kansas Constitution and protect our Kansas freedoms. Allowing Justices to be elected will open the field to outside fundraisers and threaten the Court's ability to act without prejudice. Our current selection of Justices has worked well, and it doesn't exclude the will of voters since we have opportunity to vote for retention or removal of justices at every election. There's no need to "fix" something that isn't broken.

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

Nina Fricke

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

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

Our merit based nominating process has worked well to select a choice of 3 qualified candidates who then go to the Governor for his/her selection. Since the Nominating Committee is made up of members throughout the state, it provides equal representation to all Kansans. In addition, the judge then must be approved to continue in office or be dismissed at the next regular election, this giving all voters a voice in the process.

As I watch the chaos and dark money evident in states who do not have this merit based selection process, it is clear that judges who receive campaign funds would then be influenced by their (rich) donors who essentially have "purchased" support for issues. This limits the ability of judges to follow the law when adjudicating cases. This is not how democracy that values an independent judiciary should work.

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

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Geoffrey Geist, Big Kahuna (COO) of Shark OFF LLC

bigkahuna@thesharkoff.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

The Kansas Supreme Court exists to serve justice for all Kansans—not to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Our current merit-based selection process ensures that only the most qualified nominees make it to the bench, free from the taint of political influence. Some want to dismantle this system, opening the door to dark money, partisan manipulation, and a judiciary for sale.

Just look at Wisconsin, where a single Supreme Court race saw over \$51 million flood in—more than half from out-of-state interests. We cannot afford to let Kansas follow this dangerous path. Turning our Supreme Court into a political circus, like the U.S. Supreme Court, would be a disgrace. This legislation is nothing more than an assault on fair and impartial justice.

Vote NO on SCR 1611.

Geoffrey Geist

Big Kahuna (C)(COO) at Shark OFF LLC

66205

KELLY GLASGOW

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I greatly appreciate your willingness to listen to my thoughts regarding SCR 1611. My name is Kelly Glasgow and I am a voter in Sedgwick County/ Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on this bill.

In these times of political division, we must do everything in our power to uphold our system of checks and balances and ensure that our cherished democratic processes remain secure. In 1957, our state moved to a merit-based judicial selection process after the "Triple Play" scandal that was essentially a manipulation of the system to secure a Supreme Court seat. The amendment passed overwhelmingly and was crucial to restoring confidence in fair and impartial courts. If we regress to judicial appointments via partisan elections, we are in grave danger of opening our state up to ever increasing corruption and polarization.

Last week, I listened to the full debate on the Senate floor with an open mind and heard many arguments that the current system suppresses voters. However, when one takes into account the inevitable harm that would occur from outside PAC money pouring in and money spent on attack ads, the scary reality of what partisan elections would do is clear.

Wisconsin's recent Supreme Court races provide us with a stark example of what could happen here. In 2023, over \$50 million was spent on one seat, and much of that was PAC money from billionaires like Musk and Soros. I have researched and fact checked this extensively, and the headlines about the politics of this current 2025 election are ubiquitous. It is likely to be the most expensive judicial election to date, and it is fiercely competitive and combative. Shouldn't we do everything in our power to retain Kansas' autonomy and avoid these kinds of headlines?

I want to thank you again for listening to my thoughts. I love our great state of Kansas, and it is imperative that our citizens be protected from these increasing conflicts of partisan politics and billionaire interests in our courts. On behalf of We the People, please vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you for your service!

Krista Gordon

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and committee members,

Good day and thank you for your service to Kansans. My name is Krista Gordon and I am a voter from Leawood, Kansas. I am writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

SCR 1611 proposes a constitutional amendment to shift Kansas Supreme Court justice selection from a merit-based system to direct partisan elections. This change raises significant concerns for me about judicial independence and the potential for increased political influence in our judiciary. The current system was designed to ensure that justices are chosen based on legal expertise and qualifications (merit-based, which seems to be a popular term right now) rather than political affiliation, thereby maintaining public trust in the courts. Injecting politics into our courts and the potential erosion of judicial independence is a problem for all Kansans, in areas of women's rights and voter rights in particular, regardless of political party. When voting, I ask you to consider the long-term implications of this proposed amendment on the impartiality and effectiveness of our judicial system, which in current times feels somewhat fragile.

Thank you all for your time today and every day that you make important decisions for Kansans. I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611.

Chair Humphries, Vice-Chair L. William, Ranking Osman, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for reviewing my opposition testimony on SCR 1611. My name is Pat Gouger and I'm a 30+ year resident and voter in Johnson County.

Converting the merit based judicial selection process to partisan elections for state supreme court justices will usher in big money groups that will politize the courts in their attempt to buy rulings.

We had bill hearings in the elections committee earlier this year to discuss limiting foreign money from state elections. The Value Them Both ballot question election was the reason this issue has come to the forefront. The problem of out-of-state dark money buying elections is only getting worse.

Negative ads attacking judges and the courts only undermines public confidence in our independent judiciary.

This bill isn't even out of committee, but I'm already getting Facebook ads from AFP attacking the current process and labeling our judges as puppets. The dark money is already at work to negatively attack our courts and buy this election.

Launched March 2025


<p>Active</p> <p>Library ID: 88769943361723</p> <p>Started running on Mar 6, 2025 - Total active time 7 hrs</p> <p>Platforms: [Facebook] [Instagram]</p> <p>Categories: [Politics]</p> <p>3 ads use this creative and text</p> <p>See summary details</p>	<p>Active</p> <p>Library ID: 1422840119307684</p> <p>Started running on Mar 6, 2025 - Total active time 7 hrs</p> <p>Platforms: [Facebook] [Instagram]</p> <p>Categories: [Politics]</p> <p>2 ads use this creative and text</p> <p>See summary details</p>	<p>Active</p> <p>Library ID: 607971031994348</p> <p>Started running on Mar 6, 2025 - Total active time 7 hrs</p> <p>Platforms: [Facebook] [Instagram]</p> <p>Categories: [Politics]</p> <p>3 ads use this creative and text</p> <p>See summary details</p>	<p>Active</p> <p>Library ID: 653194827044472</p> <p>Started running on Mar 6, 2025 - Total active time 7 hrs</p> <p>Platforms: [Facebook] [Instagram]</p> <p>Categories: [Politics]</p> <p>2 ads use this creative and text</p> <p>See summary details</p>
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Americans for Prosperity-Kansas
Sponsored + Paid for by AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

Why should a small group of attorneys decide who serves on Kansas' Supreme Court?

Our courts should reflect Kansas voters - not special interests.

More accountability.




Americans for Prosperity-Kansas
Sponsored + Paid for by AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

STOP letting special interests control our Supreme Court!

Right now, a small group of attorneys picks our justices - bypassing the will of the people.


Enough is enough. TAXPAYERS to give power BACK to the people! Stop a rotten judge.



Americans for Prosperity-Kansas
Sponsored + Paid for by AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

DKC Kansas is the ONLY state where attorneys alone control who serves on the Supreme Court


Our judges hold massive power over laws that affect all Kansas. Why should a handful of lawyers get to decide who makes those rulings?



Americans for Prosperity-Kansas
Sponsored + Paid for by AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

Kansas voters elect lawmakers, the governor, and federal judges - so why don't we have a say in picking Supreme Court justices?

Right now, attorneys control the process. That's NOT how democracy should work.



The courts should never be about partisan politics. This shouldn't be a partisan Democratic or Republican issue where one party might feel they can gain an upper hand in elections, which itself should be enough to signal that eliminating the merit based system is a bad idea.

What this is really about is big dark foreign money lining up against all of us. We don't want any billionaires attempting to buy Kansas judicial elections whether it be Elon Musk or George Soros.

I ask you all to vote no on SCR 1611.

Thank you,

Pat Gouger
Overland Park KS

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

12 March 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Kira Gould, private citizen
gould.kira@gmail.com

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611 and to emphasize the urgent need to keep politics out of our courts.

In our judicial system, there is simply no place for political influence. Our justices and judges must be free to rule based solely on the law, ensuring that justice is administered fairly and impartially.

We require a court that can make decisions without the weight of political agendas, one that upholds the Kansas Constitution and serves the best interests of all Kansans. The Supreme Court has a constitutional obligation to consider each case in the interest of the citizens who appear before them, without the distraction of political pressures stemming from campaign contributions.

It is crucial to recognize that the judicial branch operates distinctly from the legislative and executive branches of our government. The independence of our courts is paramount and must remain free from political influence. Justices should focus on the law and the principles of justice, rather than the whims of political parties.

I would also like to highlight the strength of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission Process. This current system has proven its worth over time, ensuring that we have qualified nominees who are dedicated to upholding the law. The Nominating Commission is our best safeguard for protecting judicial freedom and maintaining the separation of powers. Unlike popular elections, which can inject politics into our judicial system, this process has successfully kept our Supreme Court insulated from partisan influence.

I hope you will also consider the experiences of other states where judges are elected. In these jurisdictions, elections for Supreme Court seats often become highly partisan affairs, leading to the infusion of millions of dollars into these races. For instance, in a recent Supreme Court election in Wisconsin, over \$51 million was spent on a single seat, with more than half of that funding coming from outside the state. This is a clear indication that political pressures can compromise the integrity of our judicial system.

In conclusion, we must ensure that our courts remain a bastion of impartiality and justice. By keeping politics out of our courts and supporting the Nominating Commission Process, we can uphold the values that define our legal system and protect the rights of all Kansans. Thank you.

I strongly encourage you to vote no on SCR 1611.

Thank you for your service and your attention.

Kira Gould

Mission Hills, Kansas

Jamie Greason

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 Jamie Greason and I am a voter from Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

The explicit allowance for justices to engage in political activities, such as holding office in political parties and participating in political campaigns that this bill allows is cause for concern. Justices will be beholden to those who donate to their political campaigns rather than to the constitution. They will no longer work to interpret the constitutionality of the law, but instead work to please their donors, ensuring that only the rights and desires of the rich and powerful are protected in Kansas. The Republican party desperately needs to prove that they care about the rights of ordinary Kansans right now. This bill does the exact opposite.

Unethical courts do not belong in Kansas. Impartial and transparent courts ensure that the constitution is upheld and the rights of everyday people are protected. Once again, I thank you all for listening to my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Katharine Greenwood

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 Katie Greenwkkd and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Direct, partisan elections will significantly lessen choice for Kansans. A great deal of Kansans' voices will not be heard if a possibly biased Justice is elected.

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.

ALAN I GRIMES

SELF

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

ALAN I GRIMES, JOHNSON COUNTY/OVERLAND PARK

THE SYSTEM WORK WELL AS CONSTITUTED

DON'T FIX WHAT ISN'T BROKEN

Chair Humphries, Vice-Chair L. William, Ranking Osman, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for reviewing my opposition testimony on SCR 1611. My name is Pat Gouger and I'm a 30+ year resident and voter in Johnson County.

Converting the merit based judicial selection process to partisan elections for state supreme court justices will usher in big money groups that will politicize the courts in their attempt to buy rulings.

We had bill hearings in the elections committee earlier this year to discuss limiting foreign money from state elections. The Value Them Both ballot question election was the reason this issue has come to the forefront. The problem of out-of-state dark money buying elections is only getting worse.

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This bill isn't even out of committee, but I'm already getting Facebook ads from AFP attacking the current process and labeling our judges as puppets. The dark money is already at work to negatively attack our courts and buy this election.

Launched March 2025

Four active Facebook ads are displayed, all sponsored by Americans for Prosperity-Kansas and launched on March 6, 2025. Each ad has a 7-hour active time.

- Ad 1:** Library ID: 86789043361701. Headline: "Why should a small group of attorneys decide who serves on Kansas' Supreme Court?". Text: "Our courts should reflect Kansas values—not special interests." Image: "UNELECTED. UNSEEN. LAWYERS CONTROL AN ENTIRE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT."
- Ad 2:** Library ID: 42084611932406. Headline: "STOP letting special interests control our Supreme Court!". Text: "Enough is enough. Tell lawmakers to give power BACK to the people!" Image: "DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO'S PULLING THE STRINGS ON THE SUPREME COURT?"
- Ad 3:** Library ID: 60927001912448. Headline: "DINK Kansas is the ONLY state where attorneys alone control who sits on its Supreme Court". Text: "Our judges hold massive power over laws that affect all Kansans. Why should a handful of lawyers get to decide who makes these rulings?" Image: "LAWYERS GET TO VOTE ON OUR SUPREME COURT JUDGES. WHY JUST THEM?"
- Ad 4:** Library ID: 552194527094472. Headline: "Kansas voters elect lawmakers, the governor, and local judges—so why can't we have a say in picking Supreme Court justices?". Text: "Right now, attorneys control the process. That's NOT how democracy should work." Image: "UNELECTED. UNSEEN. LAWYERS CONTROL AN ENTIRE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT."

The courts should never be about partisan politics. This shouldn't be a partisan Democratic or Republican issue where one party might feel they can gain an upper hand in elections, which itself should be enough to signal that eliminating the merit based system is a bad idea.

What this is really about is big dark foreign money lining up against all of us. We don't want any billionaires attempting to buy Kansas judicial elections whether it be Elon Musk or George Soros.

I ask you all to vote no on SCR 1611.

Thank you,

Pat Gouger
Overland Park KS

RUPAL GUPTA

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 Rupal Gupta and I am a voter in Leawood, KS. I am writing to convey my strong opposition to SCR 1611, which proposes electing Kansas Supreme Court justices and allowing their political involvement.

My children are in the Blue Valley School District and benefit from special education services. They have classmates who also benefit from these services, as well as for properly funded public schools at large. The courts are a significant line of defense to make sure that all children across Kansas receive a quality education.

Our judiciary must remain impartial and independent, free from political influence. Electing justices would subject our courts to partisan pressures, campaign financing, and special interest influence—undermining public trust in fair and balanced rulings. Instead of being chosen for their legal expertise and judicial temperament, justices would be subject to political pressures and special interest influence.

The current merit-based selection process ensures highly qualified, experienced jurists who serve justice rather than political agendas. Eliminating the Supreme Court Nominating Commission removes a safeguard against unqualified or politically motivated appointments. Additionally, allowing justices to participate in political campaigns undermines the expectation of neutrality in our courts. Judicial decisions should be based on law and precedent, not party affiliation or campaign contributions.

Once again, I thank this committee for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill. I urge you to reject SCR 1611 to protect the integrity and neutrality of our judicial system. Thank you.

Linda B. Guyot

Private Citizen

SCR-1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Thank you to the chair and committee members for giving time to give my opinion about SCR-1611. My name is Linda B. Guyot and I am a voter in Sedgwick County/Wichita, KS. I am writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SCR-1611.

The bill/amendment would allow partisan politics to enter the Kansas judicial system in the selection of Kansas Supreme Court Justices. That is not what should occur in a democracy!

I am particularly concerned about the possibility of money affecting the fairness of our selection of Kansas Supreme Court Justices. Justices could be bought. Justices have a constitutional responsibility to be impartial. This amendment would destroy that commitment to impartiality. Please vote NO on SCR-1611 if you value an impartial Kansas judicial system.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Again, vote NO on SCR-1611.

March 12, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

NAME: Marcel Harmon

TITLE: PhD, PE, Former USD 497 school board member, Private Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: marcelharmon@gmail.com

SCR 1611 Written Only Opponent Testimony

HEARING DATE: March 13, 2025

Chair Humphries and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

Our current system of selecting supreme court judges in our state is merit based – making use of a nominating commission composed of a) lawyers selected from across the state (and therefore providing the needed legal expertise and experience for such a task) and b) non-lawyers selected by the governor (providing input from Kansas citizens through their election of the Governor).

Additional input is provided from Kansas citizens through a) their election of the Governor who then makes the final choice from the three recommendations provided by the nominating commission and b) the opportunity to vote to retain or remove a judge after their first year and again every 6 years. In addition, there is an existing mandatory retirement age of 75.

No system is perfect, but this system that combines input from a) knowledgeable, experienced legal experts b) voters through the governor's selections and directly via a retention vote is a far cry better than politicizing our state's supreme court by having judges elected via partisan elections. We don't want a Supreme Court that sets our state's constitution and legal precedent aside to make unfair decisions based on partisan leanings. Justices have a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them. They must have greater protections from improper influence than any other constitutional officers, and partisan elections will undermine that.

The Brennan Center for Justice, after conducting a three-year project taking a look at judicial selections for state supreme courts, concluded that states should do away with state supreme court elections completely. It concluded that the system Kansas currently uses – one where justices are appointed through a publicly accountable process conducted by an independent nominating commission – is what all states should be using.

And as Kansans for Fair Courts has stated: *...the merit system is an effective and time-tested process that has helped insulate judicial selection in the state from financial and political pressures that endanger fair and impartial courts.*

In closing, I again reiterate my ask that you vote no on SCR 1611. Kansans deserve to have fair and impartial courts that operate independently from partisan leanings and the undue influence of political parties.

Marcel Harmon
Lawrence, KS

ALIYA HARRIS

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 Aliya Harris and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SCR 1611, which proposes changes to the way Kansas Supreme Court judges are selected. I believe this measure is a dangerous step toward politicizing our courts, threatening the impartiality and fairness that our judicial system is meant to uphold.

I am particularly concerned that this proposal is a direct retaliation against Kansas voters who decisively voiced their support for protecting abortion rights. Abortion rights are human rights, and decisions about reproductive healthcare should be made by individuals — not by politicians or judges driven by partisan interests.

The right to make informed decisions about our own bodies is fundamental. As a woman, I find it deeply troubling that those most impacted by these decisions — individuals capable of becoming pregnant — are often excluded from the conversation. Instead, a group of individuals, predominantly older men who are unlikely to face the realities of pregnancy themselves, are seeking to impose their beliefs on others. This is not only unfair but also deeply concerning for the future of personal freedom and bodily autonomy in Kansas.

I believe our judicial system should reflect a commitment to equality and fairness for all Kansans. Our judges should uphold the rights of women and ensure access to accurate information about female anatomy and reproductive autonomy. This is crucial for empowering people to make informed decisions about their health and futures.

I urge you to reject SCR 1611 and protect the integrity of our courts and the rights of Kansans.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jory Hennelly

Private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for reading my testimony on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Jory Hennelly and I am a voter in Shawnee, Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

In Kansas, we shouldn't have to worry about shadow organizations trying to buy a Justice of our Supreme

Court.

The judicial branch is 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. They must have greater protections from improper influence than any other constitutional officers.

Thank you. I encourage you to vote no on SCR 1611

Christi Hilker

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Christi Hilker and I am a voter in Leawood, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

As a litigation attorney with over 25 years of experience, I am personally aware of the negative impact of partisan politics seeping into our justice system. Our courts are the sole arm of government designed to be factually objective and intended to operate on jurisprudence and precedent. This proposed bill will inject partisan politics into our courts and we will no longer have this safeguard that is designed to protect everyone regardless of party or persuasion. Allowing Supreme Court justices to participate in partisan politics will severely distort our state judiciary, will lead to further civil division, and will interfere with the administration of justice. No court system is ideal or entirely free of political partisanship but allowing it to this degree will transform our judiciary to an arm of the executive and legislative branches. While this may be appealing to one party or the other depending on the political climate, that climate will inevitably shift. We need stability and good faith attempts at bipartisanship for the effective administration of justice. This bill will only create division and chaos and breed corruption.

Thank you very much for considering my thoughts on this bill and I once again encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Amanda Hill

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

Amanda Hill-Johnson County-I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill! Please vote no on SCR 1611

Amy Hill

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. I am a voter in Olathe, KS.

I oppose any effort to replace Kansas' merit based system for selecting Supreme Court justices with a more politicized process. Our current system ensures that justices are chosen based on qualifications, experience and judicial independence rather than partisan influence. Weakening this process threatens the fairness of the courts and undermines the judiciary role as an impartial check on political power.

The judicial branch is 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. They must have greater protections from improper influence than any other constitutional officers.

Please vote No on SCR 1611.

Thank you.

Katherine Hills

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Katherine Hills Johnson County, KS I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR1611

The majority of people of Kansas ALREADY voted PRO CHOICE. My decision remains the same. Please do not change this.

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

Veronica Holtz

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I appreciate you giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 today. My name is Veronica Holtz and I am a voter in Wichita. I'm writing today to ask you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe this bill is being used as a way to roll back reproductive rights in Kansas. Voters overwhelmingly made their opinions clear back in 2022 when we rejected a change to the constitution that would restrict reproductive care. I'm a woman of childbearing age and I understand how crucial it is to have access to appropriate care. Please do not make these changes to our courts!

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts on this. Again, I ask that you please vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Laurie Horn

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Thank you Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee for giving me time to voice my opposition to SCR 1611 today. My name is Laurie Horn and I am a voter in Overland Park (Johnson County) Kansas. There is no place for politics in the courts. The Supreme Court selection should be outside the political arena. The judicial branch is different from the legislative & executive branches. It MUST be free from political Influences.

The current process has stood the test of time & ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. Election of judges is not working in other states, as well. The Brennan Center for Justice performed a 3 year project taking a look at judicial selections for state supreme courts. In their Choosing State Judges: A Plan for Reform reports, they recommend that states do away with state supreme court elections completely. Instead, justices should be appointed through a publicly accountable process conducted by an independent nominating commission.

Again, I appreciate you taking the time to read my perspective and feel it is imperative to block the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Hannah Howard

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for listening to my opinion on SCR 1611. My name is Hannah Howard and I am a constituent living in Merriam, Kansas. I strongly oppose SCR 1611 and encourage the committee to vote NO.

The judicial branch is fundamentally different from the legislative and executive branches, as it is responsible for ensuring impartiality and fairness in the application of the law. Justices have a duty to consider cases based on the law, not political ideology, and they must do so in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them. This bill would introduce partisanship into the judiciary, allowing for judges to be swayed by political parties. This calls into question the impartiality of the courts and undermines the integrity of our justice system. Judges must be shielded from political influence to preserve the fairness and independence of our courts. This bill would erode those essential protections, and I urge the committee to reject it.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts. I encourage all committee members to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

ALYX HUBLER

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Alyx Hubler and I am a vote in Johnson County/Shawnee. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

In Kansas, we believe in a fair and impartial judicial system, free from political influence. The Supreme Court Nominating Commission plays a critical role in maintaining this standard. Here's why:

Impartial Justice: Justices and judges must rule based on the law, not political agendas. The judicial branch is distinct from the legislative and executive branches and must remain free from political influence.

Protecting Kansas Freedoms: The Supreme Court's role is to uphold the Kansas Constitution and protect the freedoms of all Kansans, regardless of political pressure.

Preventing Outside Influence: The Nominating Commission process prevents shadow organizations from buying a Supreme Court seat. Unlike popular elections or Senate confirmations, it keeps politics out of our Court system.

A Proven System: The current process has stood the test of time, ensuring qualified nominees and maintaining the separation of powers.

A Cautionary Tale: In states with elections for Supreme Court seats, millions of dollars, often from outside sources, influence the outcome. For example, a recent Supreme Court race in Wisconsin saw over \$51 million in spending, with over half coming from out-of-state interests.

The integrity of our courts depends on keeping politics out. The Nominating Commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and ensure justice is served fairly for all Kansans.

Please maintain an impartial and independent judiciary in Kansas.

Thomas Hubler

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 Thomas Hubler and I am a voter in Shawnee/Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I believe the Supreme Court selection process should be outside the political arena. In Kansas, the Nominating Commission prevents shadow organizations from buying a Supreme Court seat. The current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. Popular elections and Senate confirmations inject politics into our Court system. The Nominating Commission has kept politics out of the 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.

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.

Emily Hughey Quinn

private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

written only

3/13/2025

Thank you, Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee for considering my stance on SCR 1611. I am Emily Hughey Quinn, a voter in Overland Park/Johnson County and I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Our dangerously divided nation is bereft of balance at the moment. To invoke a partisan process for selecting our state's Supreme Court is to extricate the foundation of impartiality our nation used to stand for in its courts system. I am VERY concerned about education funding, and reproductive and voting rights, and STRONGLY oppose SCR 1611.

Thank you all for reading, and I ask you please to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Tracy Hugunin, private citizen

tjhugunin@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

There is absolutely no place for politics in our Court. In order for justices and judges to rule fairly and freely based on the law, uphold the Kansas Constitution, and consider the best interests of ALL Kansas, they must be free from any political influences.

Popular elections infiltrate politics into our Court system and in turn create a partisan panel.

The current process ensures the most qualified candidates based on merit, not popularity or political agendas. Election of judges does not work for other states that have implemented this process, and it most definitely will not benefit the great people of Kansas either.

I urge you to please keep our Kansas Court fair and impartial.

Protect Kansans.

Have integrity.

Vote no on SCR 1611.

Thank you,

Tracy Hugunin, private citizen

Overland Park, KS

Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter-Blank

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Thank you for reading my written testimony. I am writing in Opposition of Bill SCR 1611. My name is Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter-Blank, I am a voter in Mission Hills, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe it is extremely important to keep politics out of our Supreme Court. In order for our government to function appropriately we need the three branches to function separately with clear checks and balances. The Supreme Court judges are to ensure that the bills being passed are following the law and our constitution. If we allow Judges to run for election it will politicize them. In addition to these positions becoming political, there will be a lot of money spent on these elections and possibly from groups outside of our State. According to the Brennan Center they have researched and evaluated the States Supreme Court processes for obtaining Judges and have found that when the States have elected their Judges it has become more political. They are recommending that all States use a Merit based system, like we currently have.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill and I encourage all of you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter-Blank

Larry Hunter-Blank

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

WrittenOnly

3/13/2025

Thank you for the opportunity to present my view on SCR 1611. My name is Larry Hunter-Blank, a registered Republican and resident of Mission Hills, KS. I'm writing to encourage the committee to vote No on the bill in question.

The brilliance of our constitution is the separation of the three different branches of government. Politics should not become a part of our judiciary. I believe that our judges should be selected based upon experience and the judgement of their peers.

Thank you again for this opportunity, for reading my testimony and for voting no on the SCR 1611 bill. Thank you.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
March 13, 2025
SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony
Judith E. Hyde, Private Citizen
tejehyde@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

The Kansas Supreme Court exists to serve justice for all Kansans—not to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Our current merit-based selection process ensures that only the most qualified nominees make it to the bench, free from the taint of political influence. Some want to dismantle this system, opening the door to dark money, partisan manipulation, and a judiciary for sale.

Consider Wisconsin, where a single Supreme Court race saw over \$51 million flood in—more than half from out-of-state interests. We cannot afford to let Kansas follow this dangerous path. Turning our Supreme Court into a political circus, like the U.S. Supreme Court, would be a disgrace. This legislation is nothing more than an assault on fair and impartial justice.

Vote NO on SCR 1611.

Judith E. Hyde
Private Citizen
66205