

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee
March 13, 2025
SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony
Connie Jacobson, private citizen, cmjacobson80@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

I am a native born Kansas, living in Topeka, Kansas for over 30 years. I am a registered voter, and concerned citizen. I just retired from teaching in the Topeka Public Schools, District 501 and I taught US Government to high school seniors for decades. I am EXTREMELY concerned that if passed, SCR 1611 will erode the valued checks and balances established in our State Constitution. If this comes to fruition, the Judicial Branch will be politicized to the extreme. Campaign funds, advertising, and special interest groups do NOT belong in the Judicial Branch. The current merit selection process of the State Supreme Court Justices has been proven to be an ideal method, keeping outside interests from the branch of government that must remain impartial to outside forces. The Court must remain free of political influence to rule based on the law, not what outside groups want. Last, it is no secret that the timing of the proposed vote on this amendment, during a Primary election, is intentional to sneak it by the citizens of Kansas, who deserve a more transparent process.

I thank you for your service to Kansas citizens, it is appreciated.

In closing, I ask you for your no vote on SCR 1611. Please, please vote to keep the Judicial Branch the separate, impartial institution that it has been for decades for Kansans.

Sincerely,

Connie Jacobson
Topeka, Kansas

Sara Jahnke

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponenet

Written only

3/12/2025

Greetings. My name is Sara Jahnke, and I am a voter from Johnson County. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony opposing SCR 1611.

This resolution threatens the integrity of our judicial system by injecting politics into the Supreme Court selection process. Kansans deserve an independent, impartial, and free-from-political influence judiciary.

Keep Politics Out of Our Courts

Our courts are meant to uphold the law—not political agendas. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law without concern for political pressure or special interests. The Kansas Supreme Court has a constitutional obligation to make fair and impartial decisions that serve all Kansans, not the interests of political parties or well-funded organizations.

The judicial branch is fundamentally different from the legislative and executive branches. It must remain separate and independent to ensure our laws are applied fairly. SCR 1611 would undermine this independence by inserting political considerations into the selection of justices, making it harder for our courts to function as an impartial check on the other branches of government.

The Strength of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission

Kansas' Supreme Court Nominating Commission has long protected the integrity of our courts. This system ensures that justices are selected based on merit, qualifications, and legal expertise—not political connections or campaign fundraising. The Commission's process has served Kansans well by providing highly qualified and fair-minded judges who uphold the rule of law.

By contrast, systems that rely on popular elections or Senate confirmations invite partisan influence into the judiciary. Political donors, special interest groups, and partisan agendas should not decide who serves on our highest court. Our system has stood the test of time precisely because it keeps politics out of judicial selection.

Judicial Elections Have Failed in Other States

In states where judges are elected, Supreme Court races often become highly partisan and extraordinarily expensive. In Wisconsin, a recent Supreme Court election cost over \$51 million, with more than half of that funding coming from outside the state. Judicial candidates in these systems are forced to campaign, raise money, and align themselves with political interests—compromising their ability to serve as impartial arbiters of the law.

Kansas has wisely avoided this problem by maintaining a system that prioritizes qualifications over politics. SCR 1611 would dismantle this carefully balanced system and open the door to partisan influence in our judiciary.

The judiciary is the cornerstone of our democracy, providing a fair and impartial check on government power. We must not allow the courts to become another battleground for political maneuvering. SCR 1611 threatens the integrity of our Supreme Court by politicizing the selection process, jeopardizing judicial independence, and undermining public trust in our courts.

I urge this committee to reject SCR 1611 and preserve Kansas' time-tested system for selecting Supreme Court justices. Kansans deserve a judiciary that serves the law, not political interests.

Rhiannon Johnson

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 Rhiannon Johnson and I am a voter in Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

The courts must remain free from political influence to ensure fair and unbiased decisions for all Kansans. Unlike the legislative and executive branches, the judiciary's role is to apply the law without partisanship. Kansas' current merit-based system upholds the integrity of our judiciary which allows them to make decisions based on what is in the best interest of all Kansans.

For example, the Kansas Supreme Court has upheld critical rights, such as the right to a quality education and reproductive rights. These are vital issues to me, and I believe they must be protected by a non-partisan judiciary, especially when many in the current Kansas Legislature have clearly attempted to roll back these rights and will continue to do so. If the courts were to become politicized, I am concerned that these very important decisions could be bought by the highest bidders and that is not in the best interest of our state and its residents.

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

DELANEY JONES

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

To Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding SCR 1611 today. My name is Delaney Jones and I am a resident and voter in Butler County, Kansas. I am writing to you today to implore the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The first and foremost concern I have regarding SCR 1611 is its thinly veiled subversive role as a bill whose purpose, altering the function of the Kansas Supreme Court system, is fueled by specific, partisan interests, particularly regarding reproductive justice. As you will recall, Kansans voted to protect the right to abortion nearly three years ago – the majority of Kansans spoke up and made it known that they believed abortion access, as outlined and upheld by our state constitution, shall remain protected from government interference. Attorney General Kris Kobach, in response, presented a speech in which he argued that the decision to uphold this constitutional right proved that the system needed a change, rather than accepting what his own constituency voted to protect. Kobach has also openly stated that the makeup of the Kansas Supreme Court makes it “very difficult” for him to win cases and advance the policies that he personally prefers. This is very concerning. The introduction of this bill upon the pretenses of Kobach’s motive to refigure the court, for the sole purpose of self-fulfilling his personal political goals over the wants and needs of Kansans, is wholly unconstitutional and undemocratic. The creation of a Court whose sole composition is based upon the will of a single, partisan group is not only ignoring the voices and votes of Kansans but threatens the sanctity and purpose of the Court system as a whole.

In addition to this specific concern, I also implore you to consider the importance of keeping courts nonpartisan. Judicial appointments in Kansas are currently guided by non-partisan, experienced, and well-educated judges whose values lie in upholding our state constitution and doing what’s best for Kansas and our people. The calls they make have sweeping impacts for

people, families, businesses, and organizations across the state, and it is critical that these decisions are made with sound judgement, consideration, and most importantly, impartiality. SCR 1611 seeks to erase this impartiality entirely. In fact, SCR 1611 risks replacing these merit-based judges with extreme politicians, special interest groups, and highly biased lobbyists, stakeholders, and pressure groups. While the aforementioned groups are inherent to the political system, they have absolutely no place in the courts. It is up to us to ensure that experts continue uphold the sanctity and important decisions of the Kansas Supreme Court, not hand that immense power over to groups whose goals, inherent to their partisan and political nature, will never be truly impartial.

Furthermore, a bill such as SCR 1611, through handing judicial power to politicians, favors the wealth and influence of a select few over the majority voice of the people. This is fundamentally anti-democracy and anti-American. It is of the utmost importance to me that Kansas remains a state rooted in democracy – a state created, run, and cherished by the people and for the people. It is for this reason that SCR 1611, which opens the door to wealthy lobbyists and out-of-state interest groups to take great judicial influence, should greatly concern all of us. It is up to you to ensure that the sanctity and inviolability of the Kansas Supreme Court is protected for the sake of all Kansans.

There are countless reasons as to why the Kansas Supreme Court should remain impartial and nonpartisan, and I sincerely hope the significant reasons I have presented before you today prove that. I implore you to vote “NO” on SCR 1611 for the sake of the Court, the judicial system, and most of all, the people of Kansas. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Jennifer Jones-Lacy, private citizen, Roeland Park, KS

Jennifer.jones.lacy@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to address you today regarding SCR 1611. **I strongly oppose this resolution and urge you to reject it** to protect the integrity of our judiciary and uphold the principle of fairness in our courts, and continue this best practice of judicial selection in our state's highest court.

Keep Politics Out of Our Courts

There is no place for politics in our courts. The judicial branch must remain independent, insulated from the political pressures that often characterize the legislative and executive branches. Justices are tasked with upholding the rule of law and interpreting the Constitution without the influence of partisan agendas. The supreme court nominating committee selection process ensures that our justices are selected based on merit and qualifications, not political loyalty or campaign contributions.

The role of the Kansas Supreme Court is to interpret and uphold the law impartially, regardless of the political climate. If the selection process becomes politicized through partisan elections, the Court's ability to make decisions based solely on the law and the Constitution will be compromised. The justices must be free to rule in the interest of justice, not fear retribution from political forces or special interest groups.

The Importance of Judicial Independence

Judicial independence is crucial to ensuring that decisions are made based on legal reasoning and constitutional principles, rather than political influence. The supreme court nominating commission provides a critical safeguard for this independence by selecting candidates who are qualified, fair, and free from political pressure.

Replacing the nominating commission with partisan elections would allow political parties to interfere directly in the selection of justices. This would ultimately erode the separation of powers and weaken the judicial branch's ability to function as a check on the other

branches of government. Judicial independence is vital for maintaining the public's trust in the fairness and impartiality of our courts.

In conclusion, **I urge you to oppose SCR 1611** and protect the current system of selecting Kansas State Supreme Court justices through the Supreme Court Nominating Commission. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jones-Lacy

Resident, Roeland Park, KS

Mary Joy

private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

Dear Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Mary Joy, and I am a voter Tonganoxie in Leavenworth County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I'm writing to ask you to oppose SCR 1611 because it would seriously weaken the independence of our Kansas Supreme Court. This resolution would get rid of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, make justices run in partisan elections, and even allow them to take part in political activities. That's a big shift that would make our courts more political and less fair.

Right now, Kansas has a system that keeps justices focused on the law, not elections or political pressure. If we start electing justices through a political process, we open the door to special interest groups influencing our courts- from inside and outside the state. Judges would have to campaign, raise money, and worry about election outcomes instead of just focusing on making fair legal decisions. That's not how the judicial branch is supposed to work.

What makes this proposal even more concerning is that no other state does exactly what SCR 1611 is suggesting. Some states have partisan elections for justices, but almost none allow them to actively engage in political campaigns or hold positions in political parties. That's a recipe for bias and loss of public trust in the courts.

Unlike lawmakers or governors, justices aren't supposed to represent a party or a political agenda—they're supposed to apply the law fairly for all Kansans. To do that, they need to be protected from outside influence. SCR 1611 would take away those protections and make our courts more vulnerable to political games.

I urge you to please reject this resolution and keep our Kansas Supreme Court fair, independent, and focused on justice—not politics.

Once again, thank you all for allowing me to share my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to vote no on SCR 1611. Thank you.

OPP, Bill SCR1611, Joyner. 03.13.25

I am submitting my opposition to SCR1611 which proposes that a constitutional amendment be put on the August 4th, 2026 ballot to require for the direct election of Supreme Court Justices.

My reasons for opposition are as follows:

- I favor our current merit based selection system of justices, it has served us well.
- I am against the electoral polarization of the judiciary
- I am against the campaign / funding circus that a direct election of judges would bring forth.
- I fear that a direct election of justices would encourage forces outside of Kansas to try and sway such an election.

Jerry Joyner
5105 W 120th Ter.
Overland Park, KS 66209

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Anisha Kansal, Private Citizen

anishakan@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

The role of courts is to interpret and apply the law impartially, without influence from political pressures or campaign contributions. The Kansas Supreme Court has a fundamental duty to serve the interests of justice and protect the rights of all citizens, not political agendas. If judges are influenced by political considerations—such as campaign donations, political party affiliations, or pressure from elected officials—it compromises the fairness of their decisions. Political involvement or bias undermines public trust in the judicial system.

The Kansas Constitution, like any state constitution, is meant to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals, and it's essential that the judiciary upholds it with integrity. A fair and impartial court system ensures that justice is accessible to all, regardless of political affiliation or personal views.

The judicial branch is different from the legislative and executive branches and must be free from political influence. The Supreme Court Nominating Commission has been time-tested and is the strongest system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers. The Nominating Commission has kept politics out of our Supreme Court and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court.

I strongly urge you to please vote no on SCR 1611.

Anisha Kansal

Lenexa, Kansas

Emily Keimig

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Hello Chair Humphries and members of the Committee, thank you for accepting input from myself and other Kansas residents today regarding SCR 1611. My name is Emily Keimig. I am a voter in Johnson County (Merriam), Kansas, and I am writing to encourage you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Over the past several years, I've paid attention to rulings coming out of the Kansas Supreme Court. Sometimes they impress me; sometimes they disappoint me. Even when my opinion does not match theirs, I am always confident in their non-biased approach. I was unaware of exactly how Kansas's judicial selection process worked before the introduction of SCR 1611. Now that I've learned more, I believe this unbiased selection process is precisely WHY the Kansas Supreme Court's rulings are unbiased and fair to all (even when I disagree with the outcomes). I see no problems with the current process whatsoever, and worry very much about the impact of this proposed constitutional amendment. Judges are supposed to be impartial, but elected leaders must answer to the people who fund their campaigns in order to be elected again. Being good at campaigning is very different from being fair at judging.

I genuinely fear a judiciary selected by partisan politics, and urge you to vote no on SCR 1611. Thank you for your time and attention today.

Laura Kirkpatrick

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Laura Kirkpatrick Leawood, KS

I believe that choosing judges should be a non-partisan process.

Thank you, and please vote NO on SCR 1611. Thank you.

CALVIN KLEINMANN

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1612

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

CALVIN KLEINMANN, OLATHE, KS

The court is our last bastion of recourse in legal matters. It should not be decided by whomever has the most money to spend to "buy" Supreme Court Justices.

Vote No on SCR 1612!

LESA KLEINMANN

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

LESA KLEINMANN/JOHNSON/OLATHE

THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO ELECT JUDGES.

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO VOTE NO ON THE PASSAGE OF SCR 1611

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Christy Kleinsorge, PhD; private citizen, resident of Lenexa, KS

cakleinsorge@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to SCR 1611. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution. 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 from campaign contributions. Our current system is merit based and functions well, protecting the checks and balances between the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of the government.

In closing, please vote NO on SCR 1611 and protect our Supreme Court Nominating Commission. Our commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers.

Sincerely,

Christy Kleinsorge, PhD
Lenexa, KS

VICKI KOHL

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 Vicki Kohl and I am a voter in JOHNSON COUNTY/OLATHE. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

The Kansas legislature has introduced SCR 1611, a resolution that would overturn the current judicial selection process, which is a merit-based program, in favor of partisan elections.

We do not need to have expensive, partisan elections with special interest groups pouring money into the campaigns to influence the selection of what should be non-partisan, impartial judges. To propose such is antithetical to what a judge is supposed to be. Justices must be free to rule on the law, not on political agendas.

I am proud that my state has courts that consistently rule on the law and not on partisan politics. Our current system for nominating judges should be used as an example for other states. The courts should be above politics.

In Kansas, our current Nominating Commission prevents shadow organizations or vested and wealthy partisans from buying a Supreme Court seat. The current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court.

Our current Supreme Court Nominating Commission is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers. As a matter of fact, we already have a system that is like what The Brennan Center for Justice recommended after it conducted a three-year project

Testimony to the House Committee on the Judiciary

NAME: Jeanne Koontz

TITLE: Kansas citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: koontz.jeanne@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SCR 1611

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: March 13, 2025

Dear Chair Humphries & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service on this committee. I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

The proposed changes to the selection of supreme court justices will weaken the traditional separation of powers in Kansas. The current process is independent and free from political and partisan influence. The courts should be able to make fair and impartial decisions. Electing the supreme court justices would introduce partisan politics, fundraising, campaign finance, and political endorsements into the process. Justices should represent the Kansas Constitution and uphold the law. They should not be beholden to partisan agendas, winning reelection, or donors to their campaigns.

The proposed changes will also weaken the voice of rural Kansans in the process. The current nominating commission has representation from across the state. The election of judges would sway influence to cities and dilute representation of our rural communities. Non-lawyer members of the commission are appointed by the governor and while you could say this is partisan, the governor's seat changes party often enough that there is representation from both parties on the nominating commission.

I am opposed to changing the selection process of our Kansas Supreme Court Justices. However, if you proceed with this resolution and put the issue to a vote of the people, I encourage you to amend the resolution to hold the election during the general election in 2026. Primary elections have lower voter turnout and tend to favor one party. A general election vote will ensure more voters participate in the process. Continuing to hold the vote on the primary election will show voters that your primary purpose is to get the resolution passed and not to hear the will of the people.

I would also encourage the following amendment to the resolution regarding the language on the ballot, although I am opposed to the resolution in its entirety.

"A vote for this proposition would give Kansas citizens the right to elect Kansas supreme court justices as provided by law. Justices will hold office for terms of six years. The Kansas supreme court nominating commission, whose membership consists of a majority of lawyers, would be abolished. The election of Kansas supreme court justices

would become a partisan process subject to the influence of political fundraising from political parties, special interest groups, and donors.”

“A vote against this proposition would continue the current non-partisan, merit-based system in which the Kansas supreme court nominating commission, whose membership consists of ~~a majority of lawyers~~ five lawyers and four non-lawyers, with one lawyer and one non-lawyer from each congressional district, and an additional lawyer serving as the chairperson, ~~provides the governor with a list of three individuals to choose from for vacancies on the Kansas supreme court~~ nominates and submits to the governor the names of persons for appointment to fill vacancies in the office of any justice of the supreme court. Justices hold office for a term of six years and retain their offices if ~~they win a retention election in which they do not face an opponent~~ a majority of those voting on the question vote to retain them in office.

Again, I offer these amendments, not because I agree with this resolution, but because if it goes through to a vote of the people, the language on the ballot should be clear and not misleading and it should be voted on at the general election when more people turn out to vote.

I urge you to vote NO on SCR1611 and keep our courts impartial.

Sincerely,
Rev. Jeanne Koontz
Hutchinson

Whitney Lang

Private citizen

SCR 1612

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

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

I request you vote 'NO. The dignity of impartial judges is a value aligned with the State of Kansas. We are kind, hardworking, decent people. We should keep politics out of our judicial system and continue as a state to be a pillar of respectable values.

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

Megan Langford, private citizen
langford.megan@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 our courts. This foundational principle of our democracy ensures that justice is administered fairly and impartially for all citizens.

The cornerstone of our judicial system rests on the ability of justices and judges to rule based on the law and the Constitution—not political pressure or partisan interests. When politics infiltrates our courtrooms, it erodes public trust in one of our most essential institutions. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of political considerations, to properly uphold the Kansas Constitution. This isn't merely a preference; it's a necessity for a functioning democratic system where citizens can trust that their rights will be protected regardless of which way political winds are blowing.

The Kansas Supreme Court has a constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them. Justices cannot and should not concern themselves with political influences from campaign contributions or partisan pressures when rendering decisions that affect people's lives and rights.

It's important to recognize that the judicial branch is fundamentally different from the legislative and executive branches. While those branches are designed to be responsive to public opinion and electoral outcomes, the judiciary must remain insulated from such influences to fulfill its proper constitutional role. Justices and judges must consider cases based on their merits, the law, and the Constitution—in the interest of all Kansans, not narrow political agendas or ideological goals.

I urge this committee to safeguard the independence of our judiciary and resist any measures that would subject our courts to greater political influence. The integrity of our justice system and the

rights of all Kansans depend on maintaining this critical separation. Please vote no on SCR 1611.
Thank you for your consideration.

Megan Langford
Lenexa, KS

Abby Lanum

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. I'm Abby and I am a voter in Shawnee County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

Politicians work for us, the people, not whoever gives you the most money. Keep all election processes fair and democratic.

Thank you for listening to my thoughts and please vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611.

Anne Lesser

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

INTRODUCTION

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 Anne Lesser and am a registered voter in Johnson County/Overland Park. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Opposition to SCR 1611 is very personal to me. You see, my grandmother and both parents fled oppression to escape regimes that severely curtailed expression of we the people. I remember discussions about how important it is for all to have a voice. SCR 1611 would remove bipartisan election of Supreme Court justices to those with vast money, sometimes from out of State. We the people would suffer, a not pleasant reminder of my family's fate. Please don't recreate that awful scenario.

A positive example of we the people is evidenced by voters' choice to uphold abortion rights BUT re-making the judicial branch would be another travesty on the peoples' will or a way to circumvent the people with a ban on abortion without exception. That's a chilling outcome if SCR 1611 is not opposed. Chilling is the lack of choice and the choice should be personal not political.

Again, thank you for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill and again urge you all to vote no of passage of SCR 1611.

Thanks,

RaeAnn Lovall

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 WRITE YOUR NAME and I am a voter in WRITE YOUR COUNTY/CITY. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I'm opposing SCR 1611 because it is being explicitly used to ban or limit abortion in the state of Kansas. Kansas constituents overwhelmingly voted to preserve abortion rights and it is the job of our representatives to respect and promote the position of their constituents. The initiative to pass SCR 1611 is an attempt to take the power from the constituents of Kansas. I have 6 nieces and it is terrifying to think that their lives could be destroyed or even lost if they do not have access to a safe abortion if needed. The majority of Kansas citizens value the lives of women and their bodily autonomy. Please respect the wishes of your constituents as is your duty.

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.

taking a look at judicial selections for state supreme courts. In their Choosing State Judges: A Plan for Reform report, 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.

This study found that “Perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly 90 percent of respondents to a 2013 poll said they believed that campaign cash affects judicial decisions.”

The study also stated that “A judge's job is to apply the law fairly and protect our rights, even when doing so is unpopular or angers the wealthy and powerful. But the reality of competing in costly, highly politicized elections is at odds with this role. If a judge rules against a major donor, will that donor still fund her next campaign? If she angers a powerful political interest, will she face an avalanche of attack ads? These electoral pressures create a morass of conflicts of interest that threaten the appearance, and reality, of fair decision-making. They're also a roadblock for aspiring judges who can't tap million-dollar networks.”

This conclusion by the study can be seen playing out in Wisconsin recently; over \$51 million was spent on a Supreme Court seat, with over half of that coming from outside the state. Outside money should NOT be part of the Kansas Supreme Court selections.

Kansas courts should not be for sale.

Kansas' current merit-based system is intended to elevate qualified candidates and prevent the politicization of our courts—which is a positive. Our state constitution already provides a remedy for judges who are not fulfilling their responsibilities with retention/removal elections after a judge's 1st year and again every 6 years. Our current nominating system has stood the test of time is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers—which surely should be what Kansans want for their courts.

Please OPPOSE this resolution.

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

Victoria Lynch

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 Victoria Lynch, and I am a voter in Johnson County. I work as a teacher and am a parent of children who attend school in Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 161.

I have taught social studies, including civics, since 2005. One of my favorite lessons to teach is about the separation of powers and how our branches balance each other out. I've taught this lesson in Kansas and would have to change these plans if the judiciary is influenced by the political whims of the legislature and executive branches. Please keep the judicial branch free from political influence. We are so lucky in Kansas that the Nominating Commission prevents shadow organizations from buying a Supreme Court seat.

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.

Mel Marsh

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SRC 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2005

Thanks to Chair Humphries and Committee Members for allowing me to comment on SCR 1611. My name is Mel Marsh and I am a voter in Johnson County/Mission and am writing to urge a NO vote by the committee on SCR 1611.

In Kansas we have a non-partisan selection process of selecting Supreme Court judges and this has worked extremely well. I oppose changing this system as it will allow a huge amount of money to be used as a major factor of selecting judges and overlook their records as can be seen in Wisconsin right now. Big contributors (many from out of state) to elections always make demands destroying judicial impartiality and transparency. Judges would have to spend a huge amount of time campaigning and not fulfilling judicial duties. We now have a fair and impartial judicial selection process, please don't change this system that has worked to well for so long.

I would again like to thank you for hearing my thoughts and comments on this bill and urge you to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Jamie Mast

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, Thank you for taking time to review my thoughts regarding SCR 1611. My name is Jamie Mast am a constituent from Shawnee, in Johnson County. I am writing to urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

In my opinion, judges and justices in Kansas must be free to rule based on law, not on pleasing the largest donors to their campaigns. SCR 1611 may encourage shadow organizations to pour money into these elections who don't even live in Kansas, as we are seeing in the Wisconsin Supreme Court election slated for the next few weeks.

The current merit-based system with the Supreme Court Nominating Commission has ensured that judges and justices are qualified based on merit. This current process has worked well for the citizens of Kansans and protects judicial freedom and the separation of powers.

The Brennan Center for Justice conducted a three-year project taking a look at judicial selections for state supreme courts. In their Choosing State Judges: A Plan for Reform report, 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.

In closing, thank you for taking the time to hear my story and opinion on SCR 1611. I strongly encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you.

Alina Matejkowski

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/6/2002

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

I oppose this bill because I know that Kris Kobach's intention in politicizing the Supreme Court is to undo the democratic decision we made to protect abortion in Kansas. As a 23 year old woman and a staff member at Kansas public schools, I promise you that the sentiments around bodily autonomy, especially amongst young people, have not shifted in the last couple of years since our last vote on abortion. In fact, support for the right to choice has only grown stronger. In pushing this extremist, anti-abortion agenda, Kris Kobach is wasting precious time on a fight he's already lost that could be spent on legislation beneficial to the public.

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 McConniff

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 McConniff 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 that the selection process should stay independent. Partisan elections do not have a place in the judicial selection process. Introducing partisan elections for our judges would open those same judges up to political pressures that we have already seen far too much of.

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 McCoy

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 McCoy and I am a voter in Wyandotte County, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

I'm writing this testimony because I'm a concerned citizen of Kansas. I believe that our court system should be politically impartial and only be based on the Constitution. It is important that the judicial branch of our government remain impartial, as it is the final "check and balance" to our other branches of our government- the executive branch and the legislative branch. It is vital that the state Supreme Court remains faithful to the Kansas Constitution and must be free from political influence. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on law the alone and not face political pressures.

Our current system for nominating Supreme Court Justices has stood the test of time and ensures that we have qualified nominees for the court. It allows for a panel to evaluate candidates on experience and credentials and interviews them. They select the top three candidates and then the governor conducts further evaluations before selecting the candidate. It is valuable to have judges selected by this panel, rather than have political elections for Supreme Court Judges. Once people start campaigning for judge positions, we run the risk of judges becoming political in their rulings. If a judge has run for the Supreme Court and has gotten significant financial donations from certain people or group, and then the court is hearing cases that involve these groups, the judge is certainly under political pressure and not just focused on the Kansas State Constitution. In other states that have political elections for Supreme Court Justices, there is frequently millions of dollars spent on these campaigns. When there is that much money involved, it is impossible to keep politics out of the Supreme Court. We need our courts free from conflicts of interests and the appearance that rulings can be bought and paid for. We must do all we can to protect the fairness of our legal system in Kansas.

If a person is considering voting for this, my question to that person is "why?". Why would you want to bring money into the Supreme Court nomination process? How can that possibly be a fair process for selecting judges? Please reconsider and think about how having an impartial branch of our government is an important check and balance to whatever political movement is happening in our legislative and executive branches. We must protect all people of the state of Kansas.

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

Kathy McDonald

Private citizen

Scr11

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

*

I oppose this bill because I believe in a non partisan court. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution and protect our Kansas freedoms. 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.

The current Supreme Court Nominating Commission has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court.

The is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers.

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.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Brittany McLaughlin, private citizen (mom, bank employee)

Brittany.b.McLaughlin@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

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 from campaign contributions.

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

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. This is not right and not how it should be if we want to uphold the constitutional obligation to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans

Please vote no on SCR 1611

Brittany McLaughlin

Mom, bank employee

Prairie Village

Katie McPheron

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and members of the committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Katie McPheron and I am a voter in Shawnee County, Topeka. I am writing you today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

SCR 1611 could have profound affects on our Kansas judicial system and our current system is set up to keep politics out of our Kansas Supreme Court. Clearly, the judicial branch is different than our other branches of government. I believe it's important to keep our current system because it makes sure our Kansas Supreme Court works in the interest of ALL Kansans and helps keeps their constitutional obligations in check instead of letting groups, politics and etc influence which cases they hear.

Kansans spoke loud and clear in 2022 to make sure we have a constitutional right to reproductive freedom and I fear SCR 1611 is a loop hole to get around listening to the voices of the people by some of our currently elected officials. Which is why I feel it's so important that our current system stays as it's what is making sure the voice of the majority people are actually being HEARD.

The last thing we need in our state is to become more polarized and political and it should have no place in our judicial branch.

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

Kristen Meek

Private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

Written only

3/12/2025

Thank you to the committee members for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Kristen Meek and I am a voter in Wyandotte county, Kansas City, Kansas. I'm writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe that justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law and SCR 1611 would bring politics into the courtrooms. Our current system protects judicial independence and keeps our courtrooms nonpartisan.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my voice with you. I encourage you all to vote NO of the passage of SCR 1611.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Emily Meissen-Sebelius, private citizen

emsebelius@gmail.com



Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. I am very concerned that the proposed changes to our current judicial selection process will introduce unnecessary political influence into a process which has been working well for many years in our state.

As a private citizen, I value the separation of the judicial branch, as a form of checks and balances, free from political influences. Our justices serve a different role than the other branches of government in that they are tasked with upholding the law and constitution of our state. To me, it is incredibly important that these justices are not influenced by political agendas nor beholden to special interests or campaign donors. In addition, justices should focus on cases in the interest of all Kansans, not be engaging in political campaigns.

Our existing process works well, is best practice, and has resulted in qualified justices for our Kansas Supreme court. By using a merit-based system and a nominating commission, we are able to vet and appoint justices in a way that protects judicial freedom and the separation of powers. Most other states have a system similar to ours; however, in other states where elections are held for Supreme Court justices, they have seen politics injected into the process and millions of dollars spent on these races. It would be a shame to change our excellent, working system for a politicized and broken system that does not serve the best interests of Kansans.

Overall, the judicial appointment process in Kansas should not be a politicized one. Our current process works well and changing it can lead to unintended consequences, like have happened in other states, where millions of dollars are spent on these races, injecting money and outside influence where it does not belong. Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Emily Meissen-Sebelius
Private Citizen
Prairie Village

Thomas Melpolder

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/11/2025

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 Melpolder and I am a voter in Johnson County/Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

The Supreme Court is one of the foundations of democracy. Moving a non partisan position to a partisan one opens the position to excessive funding from outside the state and in addition allows partisan Attorneys General to potentially overturn the will of the voters.

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. Let's keep the court free of partisan politics

Jeanne Meyer

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 Jeanne Meyer and I am a voter in Reno County/Hutchinson. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I oppose this bill because I feel that Supreme Court justices in Kansas should be chosen based on their merits and qualifications rather than on political sides/issues.

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 SCR1611. Thank you .

Suni Michaelson

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 Suni Michaelson and I am a voter in Lenexa, KS/Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The Supreme Court selection process should be outside the political arena.

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 judicial branch is different from the legislative and executive branches. It must be free from political influence. Checks and balances must be maintained and protected in our government.

Thank you for your consideration. I ask that you please vote no on SCR 1611. Thank you

Shelley Miles

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Shelley Miles I am a voter in Douglas County

I don't see why we need to change a system that has been working for our judicial system I see no problems with keeping the judiciary independent and free from political pressure from outside sources. The fact that money will be given for campaigns means influence will be expected! This is the exact opposite of what an independent judiciary system should be about.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on this very critical issue. Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Mar 12, 2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this proposed legislation to transition from our current merit-based selection process to the election of Kansas Supreme Court justices.

I stand in opposition to this change, and I present the following points for your consideration:

1. Preservation of Judicial Independence

Our existing merit-based system ensures that justices are selected based on qualifications, experience, and judicial temperament, free from political pressures. Electing justices could subject them to partisan influences, undermining their ability to make impartial decisions. Utah Governor Spencer Cox recently opposed electing judges, stating that such elections could lead to more divisive political contests and undermine judicial independence.

2. Avoidance of Increased Political Influence

Electoral campaigns for judicial positions often require significant funding, potentially leading to conflicts of interest and eroding public trust in the judiciary. For instance, during the 2015 Pennsylvania Supreme Court elections, over \$15 million was raised and spent, highlighting the potential for politics to overshadow judicial qualifications.

3. Maintenance of a Proven Merit-Based System

Since 1958, Kansas has utilized a merit-based selection process involving the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission, which submits a list of three qualified candidates to the Governor for appointment. This system has effectively ensured that our justices are selected based on merit rather than political affiliation.

4. Prevention of Potential Corruption

Electing judges can lead to increased susceptibility to corruption. In Pennsylvania, several elected judges have been involved in scandals over the past decade, facing federal charges ranging from bribery to fraud. This underscores the risks associated with politicizing the judiciary.

5. Upholding Public Confidence in the Judiciary

A judiciary perceived as impartial and free from political influence is crucial for maintaining public trust. Texas Chief Justice Nathan Hecht, who recently retired, was known for his staunch opposition to partisan judicial elections, advocating instead for a merit selection system to preserve judicial independence and public confidence.

Conclusion

Transitioning to the election of Kansas Supreme Court justices poses significant risks to the independence, integrity, and public perception of our judiciary. Our current merit-based system has served our state well, ensuring that justices are selected based on qualifications rather than political considerations. I urge the committee to reject this proposed legislation and preserve the impartiality of our judicial system.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Please vote no on SCR 1611.

Jenna Miller, MD
Leawood Resident

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 12, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Katie Miller, private citizen

kbracken2@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. Politics have no place in our courts in Kansas, and when there is a risk to defund public education, we need YOU to speak on behalf of us—the parents of students in the Kansas Public Schools.

It's my belief that justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law, and not by political influence of affiliation. Political points of view are negatively impacting our kids' education already. In Kansas, we must uphold the rights of our children's education above all else.

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.

Election of judges not working in other states. 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.

My son is in Special Education, and the schools are not getting enough funding as it is. My fear, if this were to pass, is that funding will be at risk and my brilliant boy will suffer as a result of political greed. Please do not let this happen. Vote NO on SCR 1611.

Katie Miller

Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Mikaela Miller, MS, MPH private citizen

mikaelamiller8@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. The judicial system is meant to be free of politics for fair and unbiased rulings based on the law. At the highest level, we are sliding into an era of deeply entrenched authoritarianism that is attempting to control our speech, or choices, our bodies, and our press. We cannot allow Kansas Courts to fall victim to this same trend. Keep politics out of our judicial system. Autonomy over our own bodies and funding for our education system is too important to lay down to the whims of political influences for campaign contributions.

Please vote no on SCR 1611.

Mikaela Miller

Overland Park, KS

ERICA MILLIGAN BARUTH

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. My name is Erica Milligan Baruth and I am a voter in Johnson County/De Soto. I encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Put simply, a YES vote for this bill would be an acknowledgement that money can buy a judge. To quote the February 25, 2025 written testimony of Taylor Morton, Kansas Policy Analyst and Lobbyist: " SCR 1611 seeks to dismantle Kansas' merit-based judicial selection system and replace it with partisan judicial elections. This would inject politics into our courts, undermine judicial independence, and erode public trust in the judiciary. SCR 1611 goes against the will of Kansans and erodes the foundation of the democratic system, which is designed to protect the best interest of all Kansans regardless of political affiliation. Maintaining the non-partisan independence of the judicial branch, as you know, is the utmost importance in maintaining separation of powers inherent in the Kansas democratic system." Partisan politics uses money as it's base to influence election results. Essentially "he who has the most money wins." This is not the way Kansas does things. Let's keep judicial selection FREE, FAIR, and MERIT-BASED. Please do not let the money inside the courts of Kansas.

Thank you for your consideration, I urge you all to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Remember: Kansans want MERIT-BASED judges, not MONEY-BOUGHT judges. Thank you.

03/11/2025

SCR1611

Proponent

Written Only

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of House Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting my proponent testimony for SCR1611

Kansas voters currently do not have a say in who serves on the Supreme Court- this amendment gives them that power.

This amendment abolishes the commission and ensures all Kansans, not just lawyers, have a voice in selecting justices.

Right now, justices are appointed and rarely removed, making them less accountable to the people and with direct elections it would ensure justices answer to voters, just like other public officials.

Thank-you

Tammy Minihan

Republican Precinct Committeewoman

Sedgwick County

DEBRA MITCHELL

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chairman Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns on SCR 1611. My name is Debra Mitchell and I am a voter in Johnson County/ Lenexa. I encourage you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Currently in Kansas we do not have to be concerned with any organization trying to buy a Justice of our Supreme Court. Popular elections create incentives to consider election outcomes instead of

questions of law, and may undermine the ability of justices to be impartial and transparent.

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 again for taking your time to listen to my concerns on this bill. Again I ask all of you to vote NO on SCR 1611. Thank you!

Amy Moore

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 concern about SCR 1611. My name is Amy Moore and I am a voter in Johnson County/Prairie Village. I am writing today to ask you to vote no on SCR 1611

When courts become partisan, dark money flows in from outside the state to "buy" judicial seats. For many reasons we do not want this in Kansas, particularly when extremists are threatening reproductive rights that Kansans voted to protect by a clear majority, affirming our state constitution.

It is important to preserve the current process for appointing judges. Allowing nonpartisan individuals, including retired judges who understand Kansas and our constitution, to help guide judicial appointments ensures our courts remain fair and impartial.

Thank you again for reading my reasoning for opposing SCR 1611. I encourage you to vote NO!

SHARON MOORE

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

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

Our current merit-based judicial selection system ensures a fair and impartial court, free from political influence. Under this system, a non-partisan nominating commission thoroughly evaluates Supreme Court Justice applicants to ensure they are the most qualified individuals for the role. Only after this rigorous vetting process are candidates recommended to the Governor for further evaluation. This process prioritizes judicial expertise, integrity, and qualifications over political connections or campaign funding.

If we transition to the election of judges, we introduce money, politics, and partisanship into a system that should remain independent. Judicial seats could become political prizes, with decisions influenced by campaign donors rather than the law and the Constitution. This shift would compromise the integrity of our courts by allowing special interests and political agendas to play a role in judicial selection, rather than ensuring that the most qualified individuals serve on the bench.

The judiciary is meant to uphold justice, fairness, and the rule of law—not political interests. SCR 1611 threatens to erode public confidence in our courts by making judicial appointments about campaign contributions and electioneering instead of qualifications and fairness.

For these reasons, I urge this committee not to advance SCR 1611 and to protect the non-partisan, merit-based selection process that has served our state well.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate you listening to my thoughts on this bill and encourage you all to keep integrity in our courts by voting no of the passage of SCR 1611.
Thank you!

Taryn Myers

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 Taryn Myers and I am a voter in Sedgwick County/Maize. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Here are some of my thoughts on SB1611. It threatens the independence and fairness of our judicial system. Kansas needs a Supreme Court that upholds the state constitution and protects our freedoms without political influence. The Nominating Commission plays a crucial role in preventing shadow organizations from buying a Supreme Court seat, ensuring that justices are selected based on merit rather than political agendas. The judicial branch must remain distinct from the legislative and executive branches, free to make decisions in the best interest of all Kansans, rather than being swayed by partisan interests. The current merit based system in Kansas is intended to elevate qualified candidates and prevent the politicization of our courts. As a Kansas citizen, I urge you to oppose this bill and preserve the integrity of our courts.

Once again, I thank you allowing me to share my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you. Taryn Myers (Kansas Citizen)