

Michael Neth

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

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

Having judges that do not need to worry about campaigning and raising funds is essential to ensuring an impartial and independent judiciary. If this bill passes then another avenue of corruption in government becomes available. We should not change the Kansas constitution so lightly.

We're also in danger in pushing out more young and talented workers and business owners the more regressive we allow our government to become. I'm a life long Kansan, but if Kansas moves down this path further my family will be convinced to move.

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.

Adrienne Newlin

private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

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 Adrienne Newlin and I am a voter in Johnson County (Overland Park). I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

As a proud Kansan, I firmly believe that our supreme court should be protected and not infiltrated with party politics or outside influences. The current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. 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. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution and protect our Kansas freedoms. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law. There is no place for politics on our courts.

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.

Testimony before the House Committee on the Judiciary

NAME: Joseph Nicholas

TITLE: Private Citizen

BILL NUMBER: SCR 1611

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: March 13, 2025

Chair Humphries & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SCR 1611. My name is Joseph Nicholas, and I am a Kansas resident. I strongly oppose this resolution because it is a blatant power grab designed to politicize our judiciary, retaliate against Kansans for exercising their constitutional rights, and undermine the integrity of our courts.

A Direct Attack on Judicial Independence

SCR 1611 seeks to eliminate Kansas' merit-based judicial selection process and replace it with partisan elections or political appointments. This change would strip our courts of their impartiality and subject judicial decisions to the influence of political donors, party bosses, and special interest groups. Our judiciary exists to uphold the rule of law, not to serve as an extension of any political party's agenda.

Kansas' current system ensures that judges are selected based on qualifications, experience, and legal expertise—not political loyalty. By moving to a partisan model, SCR 1611 would make our courts more vulnerable to corruption, backroom deals, and pressure from political operatives who prioritize ideology over justice.

Retaliation Against Kansans' Constitutional Rights

This resolution is not about improving the judicial selection process - it is about punishing Kansas voters for standing up for their rights. In recent years, our courts have protected:

- **Reproductive Freedom** - The Kansas Supreme Court ruled that our state constitution protects a woman's right to make personal healthcare decisions. Voters reaffirmed this in 2022 by rejecting a constitutional amendment that would have eliminated those protections. SCR 1611 is a clear attempt to stack the courts with partisan judges who will overturn that precedent.
- **Voting Rights** - Our courts have played a critical role in blocking voter suppression efforts that make it harder for Kansans to cast their ballots. Moving to a politically controlled judicial

selection process puts these protections at risk.

- **LGBTQ+ Rights & Civil Liberties** - The judiciary has ensured equal treatment under the law for all Kansans. A partisan takeover threatens hard-fought civil rights and opens the door to discriminatory policies.
- **Public Education Funding** - The Kansas Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld the state's constitutional obligation to fund public schools adequately and equitably. This resolution aims to install judges who will rubber-stamp cuts to education and undermine our children's future.

Kansas voters have repeatedly shown that they want a fair and independent judiciary - one that upholds constitutional rights, not political agendas. SCR 1611 is a direct assault on that principle.

Judicial Elections Open the Door to Dark Money & Special Interests

In states that have moved to partisan judicial elections, we have seen a flood of dark money from outside groups trying to influence judicial decisions. Special interests, corporate lobbyists, and extremist organizations will pour millions into campaigns, turning our courts into political battlegrounds rather than places of justice. Kansas should not follow this dangerous path.

Conclusion

SCR 1611 is nothing more than an attempt to consolidate power and dismantle judicial independence in Kansas. It is retaliation against voters who have spoken loudly and clearly in favor of reproductive rights, voting access, LGBTQ+ protections, and education funding. The people of Kansas deserve fair, impartial courts that uphold the rule of law - not partisan judges handpicked to serve a political agenda.

I strongly urge this committee to reject SCR 1611 and preserve the integrity of our judicial system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Nicholas
Leawood, KS 66206

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Rae A. Nicholson, Kansas Citizen Concerned Parent, Kansas Attorney

rae@raenicholsonlaw.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. SCR 1611 has the disastrous impact of politicizing our Supreme Court which will harm EVERYONE long term. The role of the Kansas Supreme Court is to review the facts and applicable law and make decisions that are impartial and comply with Kansas law and our constitution. Their role is not to take favor, make political decisions, or allow donors to influence how they rule. The judicial branch must remain free from political influence so that the three branches of government in our state can work together under a system of checks and balances to serve our state.

Our current process has stood the test of time and ensured we have qualified nominees for our Court. The Supreme Court Nominating Commission is the best equipped to ensure that we have qualified Judges that are not influenced by politics. Our current system is merit based; it's designed to elevate qualified candidates rather than allow wealthy political donors to control our courts.

The Kansas Supreme Court remains a vital tool in protecting the rights of our citizens and responsibility of our government. To politicize this selection process is nothing more than an attempt by the current ruling party to take over all branches of government and ensure only their agenda will rule the day. It's a disgusting overreach of power and one that we all will see and remember for years to come as additional elections are held.

Remember your duty and vote no to SCR 1611.

Rae A. Nicholson

Kansas Citizen, Concerned Parent, Kansas Attorney

Prairie Village, Kansas

Robert Oliver

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on SCR 1611 today. My name is Robert Oliver and I am a voter in Johnson CO/Leawood KS. I am writing to encourage you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I believe the current system for choosing Supreme Court justices is fair and keeps politics out of the process. Election of judges introduces politics and results in millions of dollars being interjected into the races to influence the outcome. The current merit based system prevents politicization of our courts. Kansans currently have the opportunity to vote to retain or remove a judge after their first year and again every six years. There is a reason only seven other states hold partisan elections, they are NOT fair or non-partisan. A 3 year study by the Brennan Center for Justice concluded that states should do away with supreme court elections and use the publicly accountable process of an independent nominating commission as we currently have in place in Kansas. I have not seen any such data to convince me that elections will improve public transparency.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please vote NO on SCR 1611. Thank you

Nicholas Orlando

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Thank you for the opportunity to oppose SCR 1611. As a voter in Johnson County, I have significant concerns about this legislative change.

I urge you to oppose SCR 1611, which threatens the integrity of Kansas' judicial system by injecting politics into the Supreme Court selection process.

Our courts must remain independent, free from political influence, and focused on upholding the law—not partisan agendas. The current Supreme Court Nominating Commission ensures justices are selected based on qualifications and merit, not political connections or campaign donations.

In states where judges are elected, Supreme Court races have become highly partisan and expensive, with millions spent to influence judicial decisions. Kansas' system has protected our courts from this kind of political interference, ensuring fair and impartial rulings.

SCR 1611 would weaken our judiciary, undermine public trust, and threaten the separation of powers. I urge you to reject this resolution and keep politics out of our courts.

DENISSE OSORIO DE LARGE

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I'm a Kansas mother and voter in Overland Park, 66213, I urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and protect our independent judiciary. Our current merit-based system ensures that Supreme Court justices are selected based on qualifications, not political influence. Replacing this system with partisan elections would threaten the integrity of our courts and put critical rights—including reproductive freedom, public education funding, and voting rights—at risk.

The Kansas Supreme Court has consistently upheld the constitutional rights of all Kansans, free from political pressure. The current system prevents special interests from buying judicial seats and ensures that justices rule based on law, not campaign donations. In states with judicial elections, millions of dollars pour into races, turning courts into political battlegrounds rather than places of impartial justice.

As a parent, I want my children to grow up in a Kansas where their rights are protected by a fair and independent judiciary. Our courts should not be swayed by political agendas. The current system works—let's keep it that way. Please vote NO on SCR 1611.

Sincerely,

Denisse Osorio De Large

Overland Park, Kansas

Anne Parelkar

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Claire Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Anne Parelkar, and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

As a member of the legal profession, I know it is vital to our nation, and the intentions of the United States Constitution, to assure our judiciary is able to act free of outside influence, in particular influence of a particular political party. We cannot do that if the highest court in our state becomes filled with politicians instead of neutral officers of the court. I implore you to vote no on this bill, and any bill that would threaten neutrality of our courts.

Once 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. We will pay attention to how you each vote. Thank you and God Bless America.

Melinda Parks

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

Many things in Kansas are broken right now, but our court system is working well.

When it comes to our court system, I believe strongly that:

1. Our courts should be fair and impartial.
2. Courts should protect the constitutional rights of every Kansan.
3. Politicians have no place in our courtrooms.

Kansas has one of the best systems in place already for selecting justices to the state supreme court. Kansas' merit-based system – not political system – is considered the gold standard for selecting justices to the high court. This system is transparent and allows everyone to have a voice in the process.

I believe strongly we should preserve our system for selecting judges in Kansas based on their qualifications, including character and ability. Further, I support keeping all bench judges and justices selected that way. Politicians need to remain out of the courtroom in order to best protect and serve all Kansans.

I respectfully oppose SCR 1611 and ask that you vote NO.

Marion Paulette

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 Marion Paulette and I am a voter in 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. 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. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, not political agendas.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission Process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. It is the best system to protect judicial freedom and the separation of powers. The Nominating Commission has kept politics out of the Supreme Court.

Election of judges not working in other states have not had the desired outcome. Rather, the elections often become partisan and result in millions of dollars being poured into these races.

Again, thank you for considering my thoughts on this bill and please vote no on SCR 1611.
Thank you.

Katherine Pearson

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Committee Members, thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Katherine Pearson, and I'm a voter in Saline County, city of Salina. I'm writing to encourage you all to vote NO on SCR 1611.

One of the cornerstones of our checks and balances system is having a judiciary that is non-partisan. In the eyes of the court, political parties should not be a consideration. Yes, a governor may appoint a Supreme Court justice who is politically aligned with them; however, the legislative branch still must confirm that justice. We the people elect legislators and governors knowing this is their role in the judiciary. Opening up Supreme Court positions for popular elections dismantles this system of checks and balances. We do not want openly partisan justices who must rely on campaign contributions and whose opinions can be bought or sold. This would be an egregious abuse of the judicial system that could end up harming Kansans of ALL political affiliations who seek equal treatment under the law. No one should have to worry that their voting history or political affiliation will be a factor when seeking justice in our court system, but this is exactly what could happen if Supreme Court justices must fight to be elected. Why would a Democratic justice rule in favor of Republican who would never vote for him, or vice versa? That question should never even enter the mind of our Supreme Court justices.

Thank you for considering my position and again, I urge 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

Mary Pfannenstiel, Private Citizen

maryapf@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

I firmly believe that the Supreme Court Justices should be selected based on merit and not by political party. As Kansas is predominantly Republican, the result of approving this measure would be that the Supreme Court Justices would be predominantly Republican, would have affiliations with the party and be accountable to the Republican party for campaign funding. The court will function most fairly if it has justices that may be Democrats or Republicans, but have the experience to adjudicate in accordance with the law.

Please vote no on SCR 1611.

Mary Ann Pfannenstiel

Private Citizen

Leawood, KS

Charles Phillips

Private citizen

SCR1611

Opponent

Written only

3/13/2025

Chair Humphrey and committee members, thank you for allowing me to express my thoughts on SCR 1611 today. My name is Charles Phillips and I am a voter in Overland Park, Kansas. I am writing to encourage you to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I am writing to oppose SCR 1611 which would replace the merit-based system for selecting Supreme Court judges in Kansas with partisan elections. I have been an attorney for over 35 years and the last 25 years I have worked in insurance claims. As an attorney I am very familiar with the various forms of choosing judges and as an insurance adjuster, I have dealt with suits in nearly all 50 states, so I am familiar with how judges operate as the result of the selection process.

I'm sure that you have received multiple responses with various statistics, so I am speaking from personal experience. It is in my experience that partisan elections for judges is the least effective and worst form of selection. The judicial system is supposed to be the impartial and non-partisan branch of government. Partisan election of judges destroys that impartiality.

There is nothing wrong with the current system of selection and I don't see that any of the supporters of this have made any rationale argument for opposition to the current system – they just don't seem to agree with the results and rulings that have been rendered. That is not a reason to throw out the system and allow them the opportunity to “stack” a court with less qualified judges (that support their partisan philosophies and are beholden to campaign contributors).

The merit-based system (even with some of its potential flaws) gives us the best opportunity to get QUALIFIED and IMPARTIAL judges.

Once 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.

Alejandra Pizarro

private citizen

scr 1611

opponent

written only

3/13/2025

My name is Alejandra Pizarro, I am a voter in Sedgwick county, Wichita KS. I am writting today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611 . thank you for all you do for our country !

The country for the people, for justice and well being of all !

Thank you for listening and all your hardwork !

Angela Pool-Funai, DPA

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share my insights on SCR 1611 with you today. My name is Dr. Angela Pool-Funai, and I am a registered voter in Ellis, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

The Kansas Supreme Court should be protected as a nonpartisan group of qualified legal experts.

SCR 1611 would negatively change the way Kansas Supreme Court judges are selected, by subjecting them to

partisan elections, rather than the professional expertise by which they are currently screened. Opening these crucial appointments to election would remove power from Kansans and shift decision-making to special interest groups and out-of-state individuals with dark money to elect their preferred candidate's success.

Furthermore, Kansans have already made the will of the people known by voting to support access to reproductive care in our state. Attorney General Kobach's push to move Kansas Supreme Court appointments into a partisan election process appears to be a retaliatory attempt to ignore the will of the people to ultimately revoke the rights of Kansans.

Thank you for hearing my concerns regarding this bill; I urge each of you to please vote no of the passage of SCR 1611.

LAUREN PROFFER

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I hope this message finds you well. My name is Lauren Proffer and I am a voter in Riley County, KS. I am writing to respectfully ask that you oppose SCR 1611.

This resolution threatens the independence of the Kansas Supreme Court and undermines the constitutional obligation to ensure fair and impartial justice for all Kansans.

The Supreme Court must be free from political influence and should make decisions based on the law, not political agendas. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them, without concern for external political forces. The judicial branch is fundamentally different from the legislative and executive branches, and it is vital that it remains independent and free from political pressure.

I believe that the current system, which includes the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, is the best safeguard to protect judicial freedom and maintain the separation of powers. The Commission ensures that justices are chosen based on their qualifications, integrity, and ability to uphold the law impartially. In contrast, in states where Supreme Court seats are filled through elections, these races often become partisan, with millions of dollars funneled into the campaigns, which risks compromising the credibility and fairness of the judiciary.

On a personal note, I have many family members and friends in this great state of Kansas. People who would be directly negatively impacted if SCR 1611 is not opposed. I stand for them, and I lay my hopes that the members considering SCR 1611 can think of the impact to Kansans as individuals and remember they are human beings as well.

I strongly urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and continue to support the current process that safeguards judicial independence and protects the separation of powers in Kansas.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to preserving the integrity of our state's judicial system.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Terese Quenette, Private Citizen, Lifelong Kansan
tquenette@gmailcom

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611. This bill will politicize the courts and inspire judges to spend time campaigning rather than doing their job. This is not good for Kansans because our supreme court should rule by law and the needs of our state, not from outside influence. Our current judges are vetted by experts and the process is transparent and open to the public. Our nominating committee has served us well for decades. Experts in law across the state (and nation) warn against repeating the mistakes playing out so harmfully in Wisconsin. Kansas should learn from their errors!

We should be embarrassed to even consider allowing dirty games into our supreme court. Let's continue to follow best practice and maintain a Kansas Supreme Court we can be proud of. I don't want to see our state bashed in news journals across the nation.

Vote no on SCR 1611.

Terese Quenette

Private Citizen & Lifelong Kansan

Lenexa, KS

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Noah Quinn, Private Citizen

nquinn01@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining Kansas's current judicial selection process, specifically the merit-based system overseen by the Supreme Court Nominating Commission. I believe that it is essential for our courts to remain free from political influence and that our judges and justices should be able to make decisions based on the law, not political pressures or campaign contributions. The independence of the judiciary is crucial to ensuring fairness in the legal system and upholding the Kansas Constitution. Justices and judges must be allowed to make decisions that serve the best interests of all Kansans, not influenced by political agendas or special interests. Politics has no place in our courts. Our judges must be able to rule impartially and with a focus on the law, not on the political tides of the day.

I strongly believe that the Supreme Court Nominating Commission serves as the best system to ensure that we have qualified candidates on the bench. The Commission's rigorous process of evaluating candidates based on merit — focusing on experience, credentials, and suitability for the role — has withstood the test of time. The system protects the separation of powers by preventing politics from dictating the selection of justices. This system ensures that the Kansas Supreme Court remains focused on legal expertise and fairness rather than being swayed by political campaigns or the financial influence of external donors.

The alternative, popular elections for judicial seats, has been shown to inject politics into our courts in other states, to the detriment of fairness and impartiality. In Wisconsin, for example, over \$51 million was spent on a Supreme Court election, with much of that funding coming from outside the state. This level of financial influence undermines the integrity of the judicial process and shifts focus from qualifications to political maneuvering. Kansas has a better way — a system that elevates qualified candidates and shields our courts from the kind of partisan and financial pressures seen in other states. The current merit-based system in Kansas allows for a thoughtful, deliberate selection process. The nine-member panel, consisting of both lawyers and non-lawyers, rigorously evaluates potential candidates and provides the governor with the top three nominees. This system ensures that only the most qualified individuals are considered for the highest court in our state. Furthermore, Kansans have the opportunity to vote on whether to retain or remove judges after their first year on the bench and every six years thereafter, providing an additional layer of public oversight.

It is important to recognize what's at stake in this conversation. The judicial branch has served as a vital safeguard for Kansans' rights, particularly in ensuring proper education funding. In the Gannon case, the courts ruled that public education funding was unconstitutionally low, forcing the legislature to take corrective action. Attempts to undermine the independence of the courts could limit this important oversight role and weaken our system of checks and balances.

Kansas is already following best practices when it comes to selecting judges. As recommended by the Brennan Center for Justice, states should rely on independent, merit-based nominating commissions to

appoint judges. This approach is used by the majority of states and helps to protect judicial independence and the fairness of the process. By maintaining our current system, Kansas is setting an example for other states to follow.

In conclusion, I urge you to resist any attempts to politicize the judicial selection process in Kansas. The current system ensures that we have fair, impartial justices who rule based on the law, not political influence. Let's continue to protect the integrity of our courts and the rights of all Kansans.

Please vote no on SCR 1611.

Noah Quinn

Private Citizen

Lenexa

Piper C. Reimer

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

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 Piper Reimer and I am a voter in Johnson County, City of Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611"

I am taking the time to communicate with you about SCR 1611 today because, as a life long Kansas, I have always placed a high value on the independence of our state judicial system.

The current merit based system in Kansas is intended to elevate qualified candidates and prevent the politicization of our courts.

Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law. The Supreme Court selection process should be outside the political arena.

The Nominating Commission has kept politics out of the Supreme Court.

We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution and protect our Kansas freedoms.

Turning this process into an election based system would destroy the integrity of our system which elevates justices/judges outside of the influence of politics.

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

Fran Rice

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/13/2025

I am a voter on Johnson County, respectfully ask that you vote "no" on SCR 1611

I am a RN and former social worker. I have seen the consequences of lack of reproductive healthcare. I fear this will threaten access, and harm women and children.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns and position on SCR 1611. Please vote "no".

Phoebe Rinkel

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

1/23/1953

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns regarding SCR 1611. My name is Phoebe Rinkel, and I am a Johnson County voter. I am writing to urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

I am compelled to let you know I strongly oppose SCR 1611, which would change our current merit based system of selecting supreme court judges to requiring judges to campaign like politicians for a seat in the supreme court. It would introduce money, politics and partisanship into our courts. Over \$51 million was spent in the recent Wisconsin Supreme Court election—half of that money coming from outside of the state. I am sure you are aware that I am not alone in opposing SCR 1611. Kansans have consistently opposed all previous attempts to change the current system of selecting our supreme court judges.

Please uphold the current system of selecting our supreme court justices and preserve our state constitution by voting NO on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you for your willingness to serve the citizens of Kansas.

Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2025

SCR 1611 Opponent Written-Only Testimony

Janell Rinne, private citizen

janellrinne@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SCR 1611.

Please keep politics out of our Courts. Justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution. I believe SCR 1611 will be detrimental to the integrity of our courts.

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 current process has stood the test of time and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court. This system protects judicial freedom and the separation of powers. Popular elections inject politics into our Court system, eroding public trust and impartiality for our judges.

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.

In closing, I ask you to vote no on SCR 1611.

Janell Rinne

Lenexa, KS

Erin K Risner

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 Erin Risner and I am a voter, executive, mom, and active citizen in Johnson County - Lenexa. I am writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

One thing I love about being a Kansan - we don't have to worry about shadow organizations trying to buy a Justice of our Supreme Court! But the proposed changes in Kansas's SCR 1611 are worrisome and not found in any other state. Please uphold the purpose of the judicial branch: to consider cases in the interest of all Kansans who appear before them, regardless of political affiliation. We absolutely should not entertain a law that would undermine the ability of justices to be impartial. We ALL benefit from this constitutional protection. I don't want my justices to be involved in political activity; let's protect them from outside influence, AND ourselves.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on SCR 1611 - please vote no!

Dawn Ritchie

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

Kansas is a great state and, I think, one of the ways we keep it that way is to keep it local. We don't need the ability to have out of state influence in our elections of our highest court.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill. Please vote no on the passage of SCR 1611.

The Honorable Rep. Susan Humphries, chair of the Judiciary Committee of the Kansas House of Representatives

My name is Rev. William B. Rose-Heim, M. Div.

brh51500@gmail.com

SCR1611 - Proposing a constitutional amendment to provide for direct election of supreme court justices and abolish the supreme court nominating commission.

Opponent

Thank you for this opportunity to address the House Judiciary Committee

In my capacity as a Regional Minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) I have had a unique opportunity to engage deeply with members of our congregations for over forty-five years. I am NOT representing the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in this testimony – only demonstrating that my ministry has put me into conversations with tens of thousands of voters in three states who represent the broad spectrum of political ideologies. I have noticed an emerging and dangerous trend.

Well-funded and publicly unaccountable Political action committees are now able to take advantage of the most sophisticated marketing and messaging strategies to play on the emotions of voters who may or may not make the necessary effort to become well informed through mostly unbiased and fair sources about proposed legislation before casting their votes.

We are in danger of partisanship determining the function of the Kansas Supreme Court if we subject voters to the influence of wealthy donors by putting forth a ballot initiative to amend the Constitution of the State of Kansas. (We have already seen that influence at work in the other two branches of Kansas government which has often resulted in less bipartisan productivity for the people of this great State.)

Consider a similar situation in the state of Wisconsin:

“A political action committee created by Musk has spent more than \$2.5 million on digital advertising, printed brochures and canvassing efforts in the race, according to a regulatory filing that included payments made between Feb. 19 and Feb. 26.

A conservative nonprofit that the Tesla CEO has contributed to in the past also spent \$1.6 million on TV ads, the Associated Press reported.”

Cited by Wisconsin Public Radio, March 3, 2025, <https://www.wpr.org/news/elon-musk-pac-millions-wisconsin-supreme-court-race-tesla-lawsuit>, accessed 3/9/2025

I would be in opposition of SCR 1611 regardless of which party was able to attract the most money for its campaign to elect jurists to the highest court in our State. Our judiciary works best when we continue the current practice of nominating and appointing jurists with proven capacity to adjudicate on the merits of any case without having to discern whether they have a conflict of interest should they hear a case brought by or against a major donor or political action committee. Kansas is not Democrat or Republican, Conservative or Liberal but a community of good people facing increasingly complex challenges that require wise, impartial collaboration of every citizen.

Thank you for receiving my testimony. Please also receive my deep gratitude for you and for all who serve and lead among us in our great State of Kansas.

KATHLEEN RUSH

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

Please keep politics out of our courts. I do not want our elections to be marred by out of state donors. Our citizens deserve fair and just practices.

Once again, I thank you 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.

Vicky Sagar

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 Vicky Sagar and I am a voter in Johnson County/Shawnee, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR1611.

There should be no place for politics in the courts, judges should be free to rule based on the law and make decisions FAIRLY, regardless of politics to uphold the Kansas constitution. We must protect our Kansas freedoms, especially at a time when our current longstanding freedoms are being stripped.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to hear my voice and my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you all to vote NO of the passage if SCR 1611. Thank you.

Linda Sanchez

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 Linda Sanchez 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 and think legislators should vote against it. We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, to uphold the Kansas Constitution and protect our Kansas freedoms.

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.

Courtney Scarborough

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

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

I am writing as a concerned Kansan to urge you to oppose SCR 1611, a proposal that threatens to undermine the integrity and independence of our state's highest court.

There is no place for politics in the courts. Our justices and judges must be free to rule based on the law—not political pressures, campaign donors, or partisan agendas. The Kansas Supreme Court must remain an impartial guardian of our Constitution and our freedoms, not another political battlefield.

The current Supreme Court Nominating Commission process has stood the test of time and ensures we have highly qualified and fair-minded nominees. It was designed to keep politics out of the courtroom and it works. The Commission provides a critical safeguard by ensuring that nominees are selected based on merit, not money or ideology. This process helps prevent shadow organizations and special interests from buying their way into a seat on the Court.

By contrast, SCR 1611 would open the door to partisan elections or political confirmations, injecting the kind of toxic political influence we've seen in other states. In Wisconsin, a recent Supreme Court race saw more than \$51 million spent—much of it from out-of-state interests. That's not the future I want for Kansas.

Our judicial branch is meant to be independent and nonpartisan, distinct from the legislative and executive branches. Justices must be able to consider cases based on what is right under the law—not what is popular or politically expedient. SCR 1611 moves us in the wrong direction.

Please stand up for a fair and impartial Kansas judiciary by voting NO on SCR 1611.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts on this bill and for representing the citizens of Kansas.

Debby Schloegel

Private citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Please allow me to state my position on SCR1611

I recently became aware that you have introduced, and are advancing, a bill that "permits" the election of Supreme Court Justices by the general public. I practiced law for almost fifty years and **STRONGLY** believe the current system of nominations to a vacancy being made by a bipartisan group of attorneys for submission to the governor (which has been in place for as long as I can remember), works exceedingly well and has resulted in competent, thoughtful jurists being presented for consideration by the governor when openings in the Court arise. Do we really want these Justices to be beholden to campaign/financial contributors? Do we really need to have these servants of the people be required to periodically campaign for a position which they have been nominated by their peers? Election of these Justices opens the door to all kinds of potential tampering/influencing that can easily be avoided by maintaining the existing selection procedure. Why would we want to do this?

Thank you and please remember this bill is not needed nor necessary

Kristine Schmucker

Private Citizen

Oppose 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 Kristine Schmucker and I am a voter in Moundridge, McPherson County, Ks. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

This testimony is in opposition to SCR 1611 which will replace merit-based system for selecting Supreme Court judges with partisan elections.

Why should the state of Kansas continue with the merit-based system? There is no place for politics in our courts. The Supreme Court selection process needs to remain outside of the political arena. If it is changed, it will open the door for outside interests and money to influence Kansas politics even more than it already does. The Supreme Court is currently the only branch of government not influenced by outside money. The judges are chosen based on merit and they are able to better protect our Kansas freedoms.

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

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. We do not need this in Kansas.

We do not need outside special interests influencing our decisions and spending money to influence judges.

The Brennan Center for Justice conducted a three-year project taking a look at judicial selections for state supreme courts. Their clear recommendation is to move AWAY from state

Supreme Court elections completely finding that elections undermine the integrity of the courts and the public trust.

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

Linda Schroeder

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Thank you for reading my thoughts on SCR 1611 today. My name is Linda Schroeder and I am a voter in Johnson County and Overland Park. I am today encouraging the committee to NO on SCR 1611.

We need a Court that can make decisions fairly, regardless of the politics, upholding the Kansas Constitution and protecting our Kansas freedoms. Justices must consider cases in the interest of all Kansans, not political agendas

The current process works well and ensures we have qualified nominees for the Court.

In states where elections are held for the Supreme Court, elections often become partisan and result in millions of dollars being spent essentially buying the position on the court creating a beholden climate on the court rather than one of impartiality.

Thank you for reading my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to vote no on SCR 1611.

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SCR 1611. Kansas has a judicial selection process that prioritizes qualifications and keeps politics out of our courts. The current merit-based system ensures that justices and judges are selected based on their experience and expertise rather than political influence or campaign contributions.

Electing justices would politicize the judiciary, as seen in other states where Supreme Court races become partisan battlegrounds, with millions of dollars pouring in from outside interests. Kansas' Supreme Court must remain independent to uphold the law fairly and protect the rights of all Kansans—not serve political agendas.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission has proven a successful and effective way to maintain a qualified and impartial judiciary. I urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and protect the integrity of our courts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Carrie Schuenemeyer
Leawood, KS 66206
417-413-3932

DeAnna Schulz

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/13/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee, thank you for considering my testimony today on SCR 1611. My name is DeAnna Schulz and I am a voter in Lenexa. I am writing today to encourage the committee to protect Kansas by voting NO on SCR 1611.

This bill is quite concerning to me, and I believe many Kansas residents as it can politicize the courts in our state. 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 which could happen if we change the system currently used for selecting Supreme Court judges.

The judicial branch is different from the legislative and executive branches. It must be free from political influence. We need each branch to be working independently to ensure the best interest of all citizens are protected.

The results of this change could negatively affect our schools, our access to healthcare and many other intended or unintended consequences that are not good for Kansans. The states where these changes have been made have not been positive. Please continue to put the best interest of all Kansas citizens first by voting no on this bill.

Thank you again for hearing my opinions on this bill. I ask that you vote no on the passage of SCR1611.

Thank you

DeAnna Schulz

Rebecca Gay Schultz

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

Rebecca Schultz, Leawood, KS, Johnson County

Supreme Court justices for the state of Kansas, need to continue to stay away from organizations buying the, out. Kansas, we don't have to worry about shadow organizations trying to buy a Justice of our Supreme and this needs to continue. Popular elections, by their nature, create incentives to consider election outcomes instead of questions of law,

and potentially 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.

Once again, thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage y'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

Michele Shea Geist, Boss Momma (CEO) of Shark OFF LLC

bossmomma@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.

Michele Shea Geist

Boss Momma (CEO) at Shark OFF LLC

66205

SANDRA BETH SHERRY

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

Dear Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sandra Sherry and I am a voter in Prairie Village, KS, in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

We must preserve the system for selecting judges based on their qualifications, character, and ability. And we must keep the bench judges and justices selected that way. As stated by Kansans for Fair Courts, the merit system is an effective and timetested process that has helped insulate judicial selection in the state from financial and political pressures that endanger fair and impartial courts.

Politicizing the Kansas Supreme Court goes against the will of the people. It puts public education funding at risk. It also puts our reproductive rights at risk since our state constitution maintains the natural right of personal autonomy. We do not need a partisan Supreme Court in Kansas.

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

Sarah Shouse

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written Only

3/12/2025

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Sarah Shouse and I am a voter in Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on this measure.

I feel it is critical for judges to be non-partisan. I do not want judges to be fundraising, political, or open to outside influences to keep a "base" strong. I view many dangers to these proposed changes in SCR 1611 changes that would hurt Kansas. Judges should be impartial and I strongly believe that this build would change the system in a detrimental way.

Thank you for listening to my views and I strongly encourage you all devote know on the passage of SCR1611. Thank you.

Stevie Silverman

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/11/2025

My name is Stevie Silverman, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

As someone who is very focused on criminal justice and maintaining the power of law in Kansas, I feel that the right of the people to choose the representatives of our highest court is a right that should be maintained. As a voter I choose my representatives and judges. The loss of this right is the loss of a powerful personal freedom. The Kansas Supreme Court has final say on difficult subjects and rules for all people of the state, and as such they should be chosen by the will and opinion of the people, and should listen to their constituents, not to politicians with their hands in the court's pockets.

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.

Joy Smith

Private Citizen

SCR 1611

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY

3/12/2025

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on SCR 1611. My name is Joy Smith and I am a voter in Johnson County/Overland Park. I'm writing today to urge the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611

Making a change to the constitution to replace the current merit-based process to select Kansas Supreme Court justices with a partisan election process has the potential to seriously undermine the separation of powers that gives strength to our democracy.

Having an impartial court is key to preserving the will of the people and protecting our freedoms. The current process ensures we have qualified nominees for the court and keeps dark money and politics out of the judiciary branch. Elections could lead to influence and interference from people and special interest groups outside of Kansas who should have no say in our state's laws.

It is imperative that judges are able to make impartial rulings without concern that they will alienate or anger donors who fund election campaigns. The best way to ensure this continues to be the case is to maintain the meritocracy that we have in place.

I appreciate you taking the time to hear my thoughts on this bill and I encourage you to please 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

Alex Sneega, Private Citizen

Asmarie1632@gmail.com

Chair Humphries and Members of the Committee,

I am writing share my opposition to SCR 1611.

Supreme Courts serve the purpose of interpreting and upholding constitutions and laws without partiality or outside influence. If a supreme court justice is preoccupied with acquiring votes and keeping their job, their ability to focus on legal technicalities without influence is compromised. Supreme Court justices hold a great power in shaping how our society interprets and enforces the law. By giving them the ability to be swayed through campaign donations from large corporations or political PACs, we are placing an unnecessary burden.

Sometimes, a just decision is not necessarily the most popular at the moment. Legal rulings should not be swayed by the increasingly volatile and fickle public opinion or party lines. Other states who have adopted this method of electing Supreme Courts have seen instability and highly partisan outcomes.

Keep the rule of law in Kansas, not the rule of the mob. Please vote not on SCR 1611.

Alex Sneegas,

Lenexa, KS

JADE STALLBAUMER

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

Our citizens deserve fair and justice court systems. Politics do not belong in our court system.

Once again, I thank you 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. God Bless.

Laura Starr

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 Laura Starr and I am a voter in Westwood, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

There is no place for politics in the courts. Justices must be free to rule based on law. In KS, the Nominating Committee prevents shadow organizations from buying a Supreme a court seat.

Once again, I encourage you to vote no on the passage of SCR 1611. Thank you for your time.

Alison Stephen

Private citizen

SCR 1611

Opponent

Written only

3/12/2025

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 Alison Stephen and I am a voter in Tonganoxie. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SCR 1611.

Our supreme court justices should be fair, impartial, and unbiased. Changing this law allow for them to be influenced by politics and political donors rather than the law and Kansas citizens. I urge you to block SCR 1611 and protect our Kansas Supreme Court.

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

Mika Stilwell, Life Long Kansas Resident

Mgreen1290@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. We need judges that will uphold the Kansas constitution regardless of politics. Politics have no place in courts. Nobody should be able to influence decisions made by Kansas justices and judges just because they have deep pockets or are affiliated with group that has deep pockets. Too much is at stake and the current ways have been tried and tested true.

I implore you to vote no on SCR 1611.

Mika Stilwell
LANSING, KS

Ronald Szymankowski

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

Electing Kansas Supreme Court justices doesn't put power in the hands of the people. It puts each Supreme Court seat up for sale. Justices will have to campaign like politicians.

Who will the Justices then listen to once they're on the bench. Will it be the law or megadonors who funded their campaigns?

Our current system works. It is a merit-based process. We currently have a nonpartisan commission which represent all corners of the state. It vets candidates and sends the three most qualified to the current governor.

SCRn1611 isn't about fairness. It's about selling off the Surpreme Court to the highest bidder.

Once 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.