

February 20, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Kansas Legislature,

I come before you today to express my strong support for the proposed amendment to Sections 5, 8, and 15 of Article 3 of the Kansas Constitution, which seeks to provide for the direct election of Kansas Supreme Court justices, abolish the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, and permit justices to engage more fully in the political process.

The proposed amendment allows Kansas citizens, who are qualified electors, to have a direct role in selecting the justices of the Kansas Supreme Court. This is a critical change because it restores the principle of popular sovereignty, ensuring that judiciary is accountable to the people. Currently, the indirect method of judicial selection through a commission does not provide the same level of public involvement. By directly electing justices, Kansas citizens can ensure that those who interpret and apply the laws of our state are directly accountable to them.

The amendment also abolishes the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, which has been criticized for lacking transparency and accountability. The process of selecting candidates for judicial vacancies through an unelected body, rather than through direct democratic processes, has led to concerns about the undue influence of a small, elite group in shaping the makeup of our highest court. By eliminating this commission, we can provide a more transparent and democratic method of judicial selection.

Direct elections bring greater transparency to the process of judicial selection, making it clear to the public which candidates stand for what values, and providing an avenue for citizens to vote for those who align with their ideals. By allowing the electorate to participate in judicial retention elections, this proposal also creates an ongoing mechanism to assess whether justices are serving with integrity and fairness.

Furthermore, justices will remain accountable to the voters through regular elections, every six years, ensuring that their decisions align with the public's values and expectations. This proposal will instill greater confidence in the judicial branch and its independence, as voters will be able to decide who represents them on the court.

I strongly urge the legislature to support this proposition and submit it to the voters of Kansas for their consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaime Kissinger – Precinct Committeewomen 526