



**Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Testimony in Opposition of SCR 1611
February 25, 2025**

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

KWAA¹ supports the merit selection process enshrined in the Kansas Constitution in 1958. Kansans chose merit selection to protect the Supreme Court from becoming embroiled in political maneuvering and scandal. The non-partisan merit selection process is the best method to ensure our Supreme Court Justices are insulated from political pressure and influence, allowing them to be faithful to the rule of law rather than a political party or ideological preference.

Changing the selection process to elect Supreme Court justices is likely to discourage the very people we need as judges—those who see a judge’s role as non-partisan and who adhere to judicial ethics rules against discussing pending litigation. Those worthy, impartial applicants who did run in an election might actually be less likely to win than those who were willing to take political positions or make political promises. Such a result would be anathema to the entire purpose of the courts—to fairly and impartially interpret and apply the law. At a time when faith in government institutions is at risk, the legislature should not disrupt a system chosen by Kansans in response to specific concerns about direct elections and gubernatorial appointments.

The merit selection process is the best way to ensure our Supreme Court Justices are the best, brightest, and most qualified to do their jobs. The nominating commission is partially made up of practicing attorneys who know what qualifications are necessary to become a good jurist. The commission is in the best position to interview candidates and recommend the best candidates to the Governor for final selection.

It is imperative that all Kansans have an equal opportunity for justice in Kansas courts. Fair and impartial courts protect our freedoms and our livelihoods. We urge you to oppose SCR 1611 and keep the merit selection process.

¹ Members employed by the judicial branch took no part in this testimony and express no opinion regarding the bill.