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TO: Rep. Lance Kinzer, Chairman
Members, House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Ashley Sherard, Vice President

DATE: January 16-17, 2013

RE: Written Testimony in Support of Continuing A
Merit-Based Judicial Selection System

On behalf of the Lenexa Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express support for continuing a merit-based judicial selection system and maintaining a judicial nominating commission to consider applicants for appointment to the bench.

While not perfect, we believe the current system has worked well for many years, both ensuring that judicial candidates are well-qualified and minimizing political influence in the selection process to best secure an independent judiciary. It is critical to the business community to have a legal system that is fair, efficient, and cost-effective to resolve business disputes, and when considered as part of the business climate, the legal system in Kansas has historically ranked very well among states.

The main concern raised by critics of the existing system seems to be that the nominating process is dominated by attorneys, which they assert gives rise to its own political influences. We believe a better route to mitigating that concern while still maintaining a system that does not overtly invite political influence would be to revise the membership of the nominating commission, rather than abolishing it altogether.

Thank you for your consideration of our input.