

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Mike Patton, 785-273-4330, mike@joepatton.com

Kansas Attorneys Support Constitutional Amendment Giving Voters the Right to Elect Supreme Court Justices

TOPEKA, KS: The undersigned Kansas attorneys, representing a range of legal practices including prosecution, criminal defense, family law, adoption, civil litigation, and other areas of law, announce their support for the proposed constitutional amendment regarding the selection of Kansas Supreme Court justices and encourage Kansans to vote **YES on the Right to Vote Amendment**.

As attorneys, we recognize that this amendment would require our profession to relinquish a privilege that attorneys have held for decades, the ability to vote for attorney members of the Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission. While we respect the commission and the attorneys who have faithfully served on it, we believe the time has come to place all Kansans on equal footing in the process of selecting the state's highest court.

This amendment does not ask judges to make partisan promises or decide cases based on their political beliefs. No judge should do either. It is about giving the people of Kansas the final say in selecting the members of their highest court.

Supporting this amendment does not diminish our respect for the Kansas judiciary. It reflects our belief that public confidence is strengthened when authority, accountability and transparency are aligned.

Under the current system, attorneys are afforded a unique role in the judicial selection process that is not available to the general public. We believe every voter should have the same opportunity to participate in choosing the justices who interpret our laws and the Kansas Constitution.

Many respected members of the legal profession have voiced their position that the current system should stay in place. We respect their position. But Kansans should also know that many attorneys support giving the voters the final say.

We contend that, in a representative government, the people are the proper source of authority. The current system creates a Kansas Constitutional requirement that attorneys have majority control over who can be considered for appointment to the Kansas Supreme Court.

The Right to Vote Amendment takes a different approach. It simply allows Kansans to elect their Supreme Court justices. It does not lock a specific selection process into the Constitution.

Under the amendment, lawmakers can still choose nonpartisan elections, create either statewide or regional judicial districts, and impose strict campaign finance rules to help keep judges independent and free from outside influence.

We understand that supporting this amendment means giving up a measure of influence our profession has historically held. Nevertheless, we believe the highest court in Kansas should be selected through a process that involves all Kansans, and better reflects the principles of representative government and democratic accountability that are fundamental to our state.

The legal profession will continue to play an important role in evaluating judicial qualifications, providing professional insight, and helping inform public discussion. But the final decision should not belong to a select group. It should belong to Kansas voters.

We encourage Kansans to carefully review the proposed amendment and join us in supporting a process that gives every citizen an equal opportunity to participate in the selection of Kansas Supreme Court justices.

Vote YES on the Right to Vote Amendment.

Signatories:

Mike Kagay	Dan Dunbar	Tye Darland
Josh Ney	Matt Bingesser	Ray Geoffroy
Mike Patton (Topeka)	Byron Harden	Logan Overman
Chris McGowne	Kenny Titus	Shane Pierce
Kent Vincent	Morten Vigilus	Jessie Rosell
Kirk Nystrom	Brad Schlozman	Sean Tarantino
Joe Patton	Corey Moomaw	Matt Vermeeren
Cindy Patton	Kurtis Wiard	Kristin Westgard
Michelle Egbert	Dean J. Gengler	Steven M. Stark
Susan Humphries	Ann T. Rider	Calvin Rider
Brittany Jones	Jacob Pugh	Clayton Kaiser
Bob Lewis	Eric Rucker	T. Chet Compton
Jim Holt	Michael Duenes	Gordon G. Kirsten, II
Mark Kahrs	Jeff Kahrs	Matthew Shoger

Sarah Stula
Cameron Bernard
Alan Cobb
Jeffrey Harris, Jr.
Gary Ayers

Clay Barker
Tim Keck
Garrett Roe
Ed Pugh
Marshall Stula

Lance Kinzer
Thomas Witherspoon
Luke Nath
Charles Macheers
George Bruce
Matthew C. Hesse