



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS

**House Judiciary Committee
January 22, 2013**

Re: HCR 5002, 5003, 5004, and 5005; and HB 2019 and 2020

Legislative members of Kansas government are chosen through a political election, which is as it should be. The Kansas Governor is chosen through a political election, which is as it should be. However, candidates for the Kansas Court of Appeals and Kansas Supreme Court are initially vetted by a nonpartisan commission comprised of lawyers and non-lawyers; the Governor then makes the final choice. This, too, is how it should be, as these judges and justices do not have constituents in the sense of representing voters of a district.

The Kansas League of Women Voters supports retention of the current system of merit selection for Kansas Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Court justices. This system has served Kansans well for over 50 years, ensuring that any appellate candidate presented to the Governor for consideration of appointment possesses the appropriate judicial qualifications of competence, impartiality and diligence. Under the current system, the selection of Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Court justices is not subjected to the realm of politics.

An independent judiciary is one of the core values of our country, as well as of our state. The nonpartisan commission system, which includes final selection by the Governor, implements this core value, as well as the value of ensuring quality appellate judges and justices. This system minimizes the vulnerability of these judges and justices to political influence in rendering their decisions.

For these reasons, the Kansas League of Women Voters strongly supports a system that retains the merit selection of Kansas Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Courts justices, accomplished through an independent nominating commission.

Thus, the Kansas League of Women voters is strongly opposed to HCR 5002, 5003 and 5005, as well as HB 2019 and 2021.

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