



THE CHAMBER

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

February 24, 2012

Dear Rep. Smith and Members of the Special Standing Committee on Judicial Reform:

On behalf of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, our Board of Directors and 2,500 member companies, I am writing in support of the Missouri Court Plan. It is a system that has worked for over 70 years and should be retained.

We have long memories in Kansas City – the Missouri Court Plan, as you know, was adopted in 1940 largely as a result of the influence on judicial elections by Kansas City's Pendergast political machine. Voters in 1940, through the initiative petition process, demanded a merit-based system. The Missouri Court plan was the result. Since then, a total of 34 states have used the plan created here as their model for filling judicial vacancies.

Partisan politics and campaign fundraising have no place in our judicial selection process. I make that statement both as head of Kansas City's largest regional business organization and as a longtime attorney.

Under the Missouri Court plan, the selection process is more likely to produce qualified and competent judges, leading to a more stable, efficient and consistent judicial system, a system on which the business community and the general public rely.

We urge you to retain this method of judicial selection in Missouri.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James A. Heeter

President and Chief Executive Officer