



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AMY DECLUE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 3:12 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: ANDY BAKKER		PHONE NUMBER: 816-319-2771
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LIBERTY ALLIANCE USA		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ADDRESS: PO BOX 410371		
CITY: KANSAS CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 64141
EMAIL: andy@libertyallianceusa.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 9:42 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Members of the Committee,

Missouri's judicial selection system was created more than eighty years ago. At the time, the Missouri Plan was intended to promote merit and judicial independence. But today, the system lacks transparency and meaningful public accountability.

Judicial nominating commissions operate largely outside public view, yet they play a decisive role in determining which candidates can become judges. In practice, this structure gives significant influence to members of the legal profession while limiting the role of the public.

Missourians deserve a system where those exercising judicial authority are accountable to the people.

HJR 153 moves Missouri toward that goal by allowing the governor to appoint judges with confirmation by the Missouri Senate. This approach places responsibility for judicial appointments in the hands of elected officials who must answer to voters.

Across the country, states use a wide range of judicial selection systems. The National Center for State Courts acknowledges that states regularly revisit these systems. Kansas will vote on the future of its nonpartisan court plan in August 2026.

Liberty Alliance USA respectfully urges the committee to support HJR 153 and all other efforts to give the people of Missouri more accountability in their Judges.

Thank you for your consideration.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BEV EHLEN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-608-0168	
REPRESENTING: LIBERTY LINK MISSOURI		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 312			
CITY: WARRENTON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63383
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: BYRON KEELIN		PHONE NUMBER: 314-402-0655	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE		TITLE: PRESIDENT	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 2			
CITY: BALLWIN		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63022
EMAIL: freedomprinciplemo@protonmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 7:37 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

The Freedom Principle expresses our strong support for HJR 153, a much-needed constitutional amendment that will restore greater accountability and transparency to the judiciary selection process in Missouri. For too long, our system has allowed unelected and largely unaccountable commissions to play a decisive role in picking the judges who interpret and enforce our laws. This outdated method sidelines the will of the people and their elected representatives, concentrating power in the hands of a select few who do not answer directly to Missourians.

This amendment rightly empowers the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Missouri Senate—both bodies directly accountable to voters—to appoint judges at every level, from the Supreme Court to associate circuit judges. This process mirrors the federal model and ensures that those choosing our judges have a clear and direct mandate from the people. It ends the era of unelected persons determining the makeup of our judiciary—a role that belongs in the hands of those who face voters and can be held responsible for their decisions.

Missouri citizens deserve a judiciary that reflects their values, and that is appointed through a clear and democratic process. By supporting HJR 153, we can strengthen public trust and ensure that our courts are accountable to the people of Missouri, not to unelected and unaccountable commissions. We urge lawmakers and citizens alike to support this resolution and put the responsibility of picking our judges back where it belongs: with the people's elected officials.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: CAMELLIA PETERSON		PHONE NUMBER: 417-726-9475	
REPRESENTING: AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 94			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL: cpeterson@afphq.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:35 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

On behalf of thousands of Missourians across the state, Americans for Prosperity would like to express our support for this legislation repealing the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan.

The Missouri Plan was adopted in 1940 with the intention of reducing corruption in judicial selection. While those goals were understandable at the time, the system has evolved in ways that now raise serious concerns about accountability and transparency.

Today, the Missouri Plan places significant power in the hands of judicial nominating commissions that are heavily influenced by members of the legal profession. In practice, this means a small group of insiders plays a decisive role in determining which individuals are allowed to advance in the judicial selection process. Voters ultimately have little meaningful influence over who serves on the bench.

Missourians expect accountability from every branch of government. Legislators answer to voters through elections. Governors answer to voters through elections. Yet under the current system, many judges reach the bench through a process that is largely insulated from direct public input.

This imbalance has led to growing concern among citizens that the system prioritizes the preferences of legal insiders over the voices of the people. Regardless of one’s views on particular court decisions, the structure itself has created a perception that the judiciary operates outside the normal democratic checks and balances that apply to the other branches of government.

This legislation moves Missouri toward a model more consistent with the federal system of judicial selection. Under the federal model, judges are nominated by elected officials and confirmed by elected representatives, ensuring the people have a voice in the process through the officials they choose at the ballot box.

That structure preserves judicial independence while also reinforcing democratic accountability. The people ultimately retain influence through their elected representatives, rather than through a process dominated by unelected commissions.

Missourians deserve a judiciary that is both independent and accountable. Reforming the Missouri Court Plan is an important step toward restoring that balance and strengthening public confidence in our courts.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CAROL JONES		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2026 10:33 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I support the HJR 153 - This bill also seeks to overhaul judicial selection but with a more centralized approach. It will set uniform seven-year terms for all judges, removing current inconsistencies.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CHARLES KNIGHT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 11:44 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I strongly support!

Please allow all judges to be nominated by the Governor and approved by the Senate.

Thank you.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CLIF		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 11:52 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Moved into the city limits.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: CYNDIA HAGGARD		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 10:26 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

The MO Court Plan is atrocious. Allowing the MO Bar to pick candidates for our two highest courts, supreme and appellate, is why we have liberal courts. We need to move to the federal model where the governor appoints and the Senate ratifies.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GERI THWING		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 6:56 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Let the people pick the judges



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JACQUIE THORSTENSEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER E SPENA		PHONE NUMBER: 816-536-0398	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: FREEDOM PRINCIPLE MO		TITLE: MRS	
ADDRESS: 13305 E PRAIRIE DR			
CITY: PECULIAR		STATE: MO	ZIP: 64078
EMAIL: jennyspena@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 4:58 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.
Straighten out our MO Courts situation and get rid of MO plan



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KAREN WICKERSHAM		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 8:11 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: KIMBERLY KUHNS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 11:34 AM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Reforming the Missouri Court Plan would ensure greater transparency and public accountability in judicial selection. Judges should ultimately answer to the people of Missouri and reflect the values of the communities they serve.

It is difficult to understand the rationale behind some recent court rulings, and as a voter it is very frustrating to see decisions that appear to run counter to conservative values. Unfortunately, this concern is tied to the judicial selection process itself. The current system allows special interests to play a role in determining which names are submitted to serve as judges.

When that occurs, the process risks prioritizing insider influence over the values of the citizens of Missouri. If the courts are to maintain public trust, the selection process must be reexamined and revised so that the judiciary—and its rulings—better reflect the values and expectations of the people it serves.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: OSCAR HARRELL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 7:23 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: PATRICIA KNIGHT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 11:06 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I strongly support!

ALL judges should be appointed by the Governor AND have Senate approval.

Bravo!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: RAY MCCARTY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2246
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF MISSOURI		TITLE: PRESIDENT/CEO
ADDRESS: 3234 W TRUMAN BLVD		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: rmccarty@aimo.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 2:18 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Associated Industries of Missouri supports allowing the Governor to appoint judges with the advice and consent of the Senate.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD MICHAEL FRANCO		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2026 11:41 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

It is time to reform the Missouri Court Plan. While intended to remove influence from the Pendergast machine many decades ago, it has become a means for the state bar association to dominate the judicial process, effectively allowing trial attorneys to pick their own judges.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: SAMUEL H. LEE		PHONE NUMBER: 314-368-4242	
REPRESENTING: CAMPAIGN LIFE MISSOURI		TITLE: DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 142585			
CITY: SAINT LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63114
EMAIL: samuelhlee@mindspring.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 11:39 AM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

Alexander Hamilton argued in *The Federalist* #76 that the President should have the power to nominate judges, while the Senate should be charged with providing “advice and consent” to confirm them. This system, he argued, combines executive preference with legislative checks to ensure merit-based appointments, preventing favoritism and corruption.

Hamilton argued that a single nominator (the President) with the approval of a diverse body (the Senate) is superior to having appointments made by a large assembly (too much factionalism) or a single person with no oversight (potential for favoritism).

The Senate’s power, Hamilton said, “would be an excellent check upon a spirit of favoritism in the President, and would tend greatly to prevent the appointment of unfit characters from State prejudice, from family connection, from personal attachment, or from a view to popularity.”

Hamilton added that a President “who had himself the sole disposition of offices, would be governed much more by his private inclinations and interests, than when he was bound to submit the propriety of his choice to the discussion and determination of a different and independent body, and that body an entire branch of the legislature. The possibility of rejection would be a strong motive to care in proposing.”

This is the federal model for the nomination and appointment of judges, and the people of Missouri should have an opportunity, by amending our state Constitution, to decide whether to adopt this model in our own state.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ABIGAIL HERNDON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 7:59 PM

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

This is another attack on the constitution and a affront to our government 3 branch system. The legislative branch wants more power and this a massive political over reach on their part. This would destroy our checks and balances system, that is the judicial branch. It is vital that the court system stay non partisan and allow to do its job without interference from politicians. It's called the People's court not Politicians court for a reason. Missouri's Non-Partisan Court Plan was created and voted by the citizens of Missouri and reaffirmed with another vote when legislators tried repealing two years after it was added to our constitution. Respect the people and our power



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:		
WITNESS NAME: ANDY BRISCOE		PHONE NUMBER:
REPRESENTING: THE MISSOURI BAR		TITLE:
ADDRESS: 326 MONROE STREET		
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. A.C. "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1935			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: DAVID J KLARICH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-560-1616	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI CIRCUIT JUDGES' ASSOCIATION		TITLE: ATTORNEY	
ADDRESS: 438 GATEFORD DRIVE			
CITY: BALLWIN		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63021
EMAIL: dklarich@sbcglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2026 9:46 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ERIC D. JENNINGS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-526-4726	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF MISSOURI		TITLE: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COUNSEL	
ADDRESS: 207 WEST HIGH STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JONATHAN SCHMID		PHONE NUMBER: 314-652-3114	
REPRESENTING: AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF MISSOURI		TITLE: POLICY COUNSEL	
ADDRESS: 906 OLIVE ST. STE. 1130			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63101
EMAIL: jschmid@aclu-mo.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:40 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL SUDEKUM		PHONE NUMBER: 573-635-5215	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI ASSOC OF TRIAL ATTYS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 240 E HIGH ST			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: RANDY SCHERR		PHONE NUMBER: 573-636-6200	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI ORGANIZATION OF DEFERENCE LAWYERS; MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF CRIMINAL DEFENSE LAWYERS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 101 E. HIGH			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: rjscherr@swllc.us.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 9:53 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 12:48 PM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

HJR 153 proposes to repeal significant portions of Article V of the Missouri Constitution governing the state’s nonpartisan judicial selection system and replace that system with direct gubernatorial appointment of judges subject to Senate confirmation.

This proposal would fundamentally alter the constitutional structure designed to protect judicial independence in Missouri.

First, HJR 153 eliminates the nonpartisan judicial commissions that currently nominate judicial candidates. These commissions serve as an institutional safeguard intended to reduce political influence over the judiciary by requiring that qualified candidates be screened and nominated through a mixed citizen-lawyer commission process. By removing this structure entirely, the amendment concentrates the power of judicial selection almost entirely within the executive and legislative branches.

Second, the resolution repeals the constitutional provisions governing judicial retention elections. Under the existing Missouri nonpartisan court plan, judges are initially appointed through a commission process but must periodically stand before voters for retention. Eliminating this system removes an important mechanism through which the public can hold judges accountable while still preserving judicial independence from partisan campaigns.

Third, the amendment creates a system in which all judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, circuit courts, and associate circuit courts would be appointed directly by the Governor with Senate confirmation. Such a structure risks subjecting judicial appointments to the same political dynamics that influence other executive appointments, thereby increasing the likelihood that judicial selection becomes aligned with shifting political priorities rather than professional qualifications and impartial judicial temperament.

Fourth, the proposal replaces existing judicial term structures with uniform seven-year appointment terms. Over time, this would allow future governors and legislatures to reshape large portions of the state judiciary through ordinary political cycles.

Finally, because HJR 153 proposes a constitutional amendment rather than a statutory change, the dismantling of Missouri’s long-standing nonpartisan judicial selection framework would be difficult to reverse if adopted.

Missouri's nonpartisan judicial selection system has historically been regarded as a structural safeguard intended to preserve the independence and integrity of the courts.

Altering that system requires careful consideration of the balance between democratic accountability and protection of the judiciary from political pressure.

Members of the General Assembly are respectfully placed on notice that HJR 153 would significantly increase political influence over the judicial branch and would fundamentally alter the constitutional framework governing judicial independence in Missouri.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 153		DATE: 3/11/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: THOMAS J. BENOIST		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/11/2026 5:48 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

My name is TJ Benoist, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to legislation that would dismantle Missouri's Nonpartisan Court Plan.

To understand why this system exists, we must remember the moment in Missouri history that created it. The Missouri Plan was born out of one of the darkest periods of political corruption in our state's history. In the early twentieth century, political machines dominated Missouri politics, particularly in Kansas City under the control of Tom Pendergast. Judges were not selected because of their qualifications or commitment to the rule of law. They were selected because they were loyal to the political machine that put them on the ballot.

Missourians responded to that crisis with reform. In 1940, voters adopted the Nonpartisan Court Plan to restore public trust in the judiciary. The system created a merit-based process in which joint lawyer-lay person commissions evaluate judicial applicants based on qualifications, experience, and integrity. The governor then appoints from a list of qualified nominees, and the public retains the ultimate authority through retention elections.

This system strikes an important balance. It ensures that the governor plays a role in judicial appointments while preventing any single political actor from controlling the process. The nominating commissions serve as a safeguard, ensuring that every candidate presented to the governor has been vetted for their professional qualifications, integrity, and commitment to the rule of law.

The proposals before this committee would remove that safeguard and allow the governor to appoint judges without the independent screening process that Missourians put in place nearly a century ago. That change would concentrate significant power in a single office and eliminate the merit-based filter that has helped keep politics from dominating judicial selection.

The purpose of the Missouri Plan was to ensure that judges are chosen first for their qualifications, not their political loyalty. The nominating commissions are not obstacles to democracy. They are a guardrail that protects the independence and credibility of our courts.

Missouri's court plan has served our state well for decades and has become a model for other states seeking to balance democratic accountability with judicial independence.

The question before this committee is not simply about changing a selection process. It is about whether Missouri will preserve a system designed to protect the integrity of the judiciary or move

toward one where judicial appointments are concentrated in a single political office.

For those reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject these bills and preserve Missouri's Nonpartisan Court Plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration.