

House Judiciary Committee
Testimony: SCR 1611, Opponent (Oral, WebEx)
March 13, 2025
Presented by: Sue Bond, Former Nominating Commission Member

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sue Bond. I was appointed by Governor Bill Graves to serve on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, from 1996-2004. As you may know, the Commission is composed of one lay person and one lawyer from each of the four Congressional Districts. The fifth lawyer is the chairman of the Commission and is elected at large by lawyers in the bar.

When there is an opening on the Supreme Court, a notice is posted and interested lawyers fill out a multi-page application. After all of the applications are processed by the judicial staff, the Commission meets in Topeka. Applications from each candidate are distributed and general rules are discussed.

The members of the Commission then return to Topeka in three to four weeks, after having researched each candidate's application information. A lengthy discussion of each member's findings on each applicant proceeds.

The discussion is very thorough and deliberative—*respect and decorum are paid to each member* as they discuss their findings. After all the applicants have been discussed, the commission votes by secret ballot.

I'd like to share a particular experience I had while serving on the Commission. There was an applicant that had listed the names and phone numbers of people to call that would recommend him to the Court. Usually, when I would make a call and identify myself as a member of the Supreme Court Nominating Commission, I would get an immediate response. This particular time I called the phone numbers this applicant provided several times, left messages, and no one ever called me back.

Prior to this, a number of members of the Commission had been leaning toward forwarding this applicant. However, when I reported my information at the meeting, the other members of the commission were quickly persuaded to back off that candidate.

I share this experience because I've heard proponents of this bill say that the current process is controlled by lawyers and **that is simply not true, and was never a part of my experience on the Nominating Commission.** I never felt my voice was considered any less than those of the lawyers.

I worked hard researching the applicants each time a new position opened and consider my time on the Supreme Court Nominating Commission one of the highlights of my life in community service. Thank you for considering my comments today. I'd be happy to take committee questions at the appropriate time.