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KANSANS ALARMED BY BROWNBACK'S LACK OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REACT TO JUDICIAL PLAN

TOPEKA — Today, the Kansas Values Institute launched an online effort to raise awareness around Governor Sam Brownback's plan to keep the names of Kansas Court of Appeals applicants secret from the public, reversing a process that has been in place for decades.

"No Kansan wants to end up in a courtroom, but if you do you want to know that you will be treated fairly under the law and that your judge is qualified to sit on the bench," said executive director Ryan Wright. "Right now, Governor Brownback has set the stage for creating a kangaroo court on the Kansas Court of Appeals. He has told Kansans to 'trust him' but hasn't earned the right to that trust based on his track record of failed policies, which put politics over the lives of hardworking Kansans."

Kansans are encouraged to visit, www.KansasValuesInstitute.org/KCOA, sign the petition and get involved. The public will be able to sign up for judicial updates in an effort to hold Governor Brownback and his legislative allies accountable. The petition will be presented to Brownback and legislative leaders at a later date.

Wright went on to say, "We have already seen in statements by Brownback and Senate President Susan Wagle that they are more interested in a rubber-stamp court than one that protects and defends the Kansas Constitution. They have even gone so far as to threaten a 'constitutional crisis' if the courts don't rule the way they want on the school funding case. Kansans have seen court-packing efforts before by politicians and it didn't work out too well for them in the end. This time will be no different and we look forward to educating Kansans on efforts to attack our free and fair court system in the coming months."

The existing system for selecting judges to the Kansas Court of Appeals was changed during the 2013 Legislative Session. The previous merit based process was replaced with a political process at the insistence of Brownback. Prior to this year, Appeals Court applicants underwent the same rigorous vetting process that nominees to the Kansas Supreme Court faced. Under Brownback's new, political system applicants will not be known until their names are presented to the Kansas Senate for confirmation. Historically, the last major rejection of gubernatorial appointments came during the administration of Governor Joan Finney (Democrat) and her appointments to the Kansas Board of Regents, nearly 20 years ago.

For more information about the Kansas Values Institute or to get involved, please visit www.KansasValuesInstitute.org.