



August 19, 2020

Justice Eric S. Rosen
Interim Chair, Thirtieth Judicial District Nominating Commission
Kansas Judicial Center
301 SW 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Justice Rosen and Members of the Thirtieth Judicial District Nominating Commission:

On behalf of the Kansas Women Attorneys Association (KWAA), I want to thank you for serving on the Thirtieth Judicial District Nominating Commission. Your dedication to our judicial system and the selection of fair and impartial judges is valuable and appreciated.

An important consideration for your impending deliberations is the demographic representation of the Thirtieth District's bench. As you can see from the enclosed report, *The Gavel Gap: Who Sits in Judgment on State Courts* issued by the American Constitution Society for Law and Policy, state courts do not adequately reflect the diversity of our citizens. For example, while half of the population is female and approximately 5%* of the Thirtieth Judicial District's residents are people of color, these groups are underrepresented on the Thirtieth Judicial District's bench. The benefits of a diverse bench are largely undisputed. Research has consistently shown that when courts reflect the populations they serve, judges bring a broader range of experiences to the judicial decision-making process, which, in turn, results in increased confidence in the fairness and impartiality of our justice system.

We understand that your mission is to select the most qualified candidates, regardless of race or gender. We are confident that no member of the Nominating Commission enters the process with explicit biases, but, as reflected by research documented by the American Bar Association, many decisions are unknowingly impacted by implicit bias. We ask that you remain mindful of the impact of implicit bias on your deliberations. KWAA encourages you to recommend diverse candidates, including women and persons of color, for judicial vacancies. It is time for Kansas to address the issue of diversity in our state courts.

Sincerely,

Sarah Morse
KWAA President

*Derived from July 2019 Census estimates.