

OLATHE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF MERIT SELECTION OF JUDGES
AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE NOVEMBER 4, 2008 QUESTION 1 SEEKING
TO SELECT JUDGES THROUGH PARTISAN ELECTIONS

Whereas, Johnson County voters will be asked to choose on the November 4, 2008 ballot between the existing merit selection system for district court judges and a change to a partisan political system for selecting our judges, and

Whereas, a stable and fair judicial system based on an objective application of the U.S. and Kansas Constitutions and the laws of the State of Kansas, free of special interest considerations or political or ideological bias, is an important aspect to the business and economic development and stability of Olathe and Johnson County; and

Whereas, the current system of selecting judges based on merit and qualifications has worked well since 1978 and contains an appropriate balance of direct citizen participation on the nominating commission, an open and public nominating process, and scrutiny of judicial candidates by both attorneys familiar with them, by lay citizens, and by the Governor, and allows citizens the opportunity to retain or expel judges every four years through a retention election; and

Whereas, a change to partisan elections would encourage if not require judicial candidates to become political both in their election campaigns and in their consideration of issues and decisions required to be decided by them as a judge; and

Whereas, judicial elections would require judicial candidates to solicit and collect tens of thousands of dollars of campaign funds, offer political campaign promises, seek endorsements of individuals and special interest groups, and take positions on issues that might ultimately come before them in court, thus decreasing the public's confidence in a fair and impartial court system in Johnson County;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Olathe Chamber of Commerce hereby states its opposition to the November 4, 2008 ballot proposition that would change the current method of selecting judges in Johnson County, urges its members and the Olathe community businesses and individuals to oppose partisan political elections of judges, and encourages continue selection of judges based on merit, qualifications and experience.

Adopted this 24 day of June, 2008.