



KANSAS APPLESEED
Justice for all.

February 14, 2018

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611

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Opposition Testimony

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611. Kansas Appleseed is a nonprofit public interest advocacy center. We believe Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities. We urge the committee to reject this proposal for the following reasons:

- **A balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, one of the aims of a Constitutional Convention, would not help Kansas communities thrive.** Nobel Laureate economists have expressed concerns about such an amendment and its potential to push economies into recession and make recessions longer and deeper. Low-income families are often the first impacted by recessions and the last to recover. Such an amendment would not help all Kansans have the resources they need to support themselves and raise healthy families.
- **States cannot limit the scope of a Constitutional Convention, which could lead to policies that would make Kansas communities less inclusive.** A Constitutional Convention would open up the Constitution to whatever amendments delegates chose to propose and provide few safeguards for maintaining the critical Constitutional protections that have led to more equal rights for all Americans. This would not help all Kansans participate fully in the community under equal protection of the law.
- **A Constitutional Convention would threaten the underpinnings of our justice system, not make Kansas communities more just.** While the Constitution has not always protected the rights of every American, it has been an evolving document, and its evolution reflects our progress towards justice. Putting the rights afforded to Americans through the Constitution and subsequent judicial interpretations at risk would not help ensure all Kansans benefit from a fair and effective judicial system.

Policymakers have plenty of opportunities to help build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities without risking the substantial uncertainty and potential negative effects a Constitutional Convention could cause. For these reasons, Kansas Appleseed urges the Committee to reject Senate Concurrent Resolution 1611.