

*better*  
**COURTS**  
**FOR**  
**MISSOURI**

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**BETTER COURTS FOR MISSOURI COALITION**  
**CLAIMS SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE**  
**VICTORIES**

*“Reform is the only way to restore public trust in the Missouri Plan and the judiciary.”*

**JEFFERSON CITY** – Better Courts for Missouri Coalition leaders today expressed optimism as they achieved two important milestones in their effort to modernize the Missouri Plan for selecting judges.

**First**, coalition leaders praised legislators for asking tough questions and standing up to the elite legal establishment during today’s House committee hearing concerning HJR 49 and HJR 51. According to Representative Jim Lembke, “The clear message coming out of today’s legislative hearing was that the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys wants to keep the process closed because they do not trust non-lawyers to make important decisions.” Representative Shannon Cooper echoed that statement, saying “Missourians are not stupid. They will recognize that MATA is ultimately in this to protect their own interests.”

**Second**, coalition leaders applauded Representative Juanita Head Walton and other Democratic legislators for proposing HJR 66, which would also modify the Missouri Plan. According to Jonathan Bunch, Executive Director of Better Courts, “We look forward to working with Representative Walton and her co-sponsors and encourage their constituents to recognize the courage it takes to file a resolution that will bring the scorn of the entire elite legal establishment.”

Bunch rejected charges that this effort was a partisan attempt to politicize the judiciary, stating “Our shared message of openness and accountability has consistently been bigger than the political bickering we are all tired of.” “This grass-roots movement is not about isolated cases or individual judges, nor about Republicans vs. Democrats. Instead, it is about the strength and integrity of the judicial branch of government, the non-political branch charged with protecting our fundamental rights.”

Better Courts for Missouri Coalition leaders and legal experts’ testimony can be found at [www.newmoplan.com](http://www.newmoplan.com). ***If you would like to schedule an interview with either of the above Coalition leaders or legal experts, please contact Jonathan Bunch, Executive Director, Better Courts for Missouri, 573-635-0782, [jon@newmoplan.com](mailto:jon@newmoplan.com).***

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