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## **Better Courts for Missouri Praises Justice O'Connor's Call for More Transparency in Missouri's Judicial Selection Process**

***“When even a moderate judge such as Justice O’Connor is calling for reform in the Missouri Plan, we know that now is the time to ensure Missourians have judges that are selected through an unbiased process and secret hearings need to be abolished.”***

*-- James Harris, Executive Director, Better Courts for Missouri --*

(Jefferson City, MO) – Today, Better Courts for Missouri Coalition (BCM) praised former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor for her recognition that transparency is needed in the judicial selection process. “When even a moderate judge such as Justice O’Connor is calling for reform in the Missouri Plan, we know that now is the time to ensure Missourians have judges that are selected through an unbiased process and secret hearings need to be abolished,” stated James Harris, Executive Director of BCM.

In a speech given on Friday at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Justice O’Connor indicated that when state’s had judicial selection proceedings discouraging public input and lacking transparency, changes needed to be made. “You can’t have secret proceedings,” stated O’Connor. She advocated changes made in her home state of Arizona allowing for open meetings of the judicial nominating commission as well as a public comment period that allows regular citizens to provide input on the selection of judges.

Harris urged Missouri Chief Justice Laura Denvir Stith to immediately implement the reforms suggested by Justice O’Connor: “Chief Justice Stith has talked about restoring the public’s trust in our legal system and ensuring we have an impartial judiciary - now is the time for action. I renew my call on the Chief Justice to join me in a series of public forums to engage the Missouri citizenry in this important topic.”

***To schedule an interview with James Harris, Executive Director, Better Courts for Missouri, please contact Elizabeth Ray at (703)-683-5004, ext. 130, [eray@crccpublicrelations.com](mailto:eray@crccpublicrelations.com).***

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