

# GAME CHANGER

larissalawrie {photographer}



The whistle blows; a referee has just called a team on a last second foul that causes the team to lose the game. Naturally, fans are upset and a few irritated boos are understandable.

In the realm of sports, it's become totally acceptable to blame tough losses on questionable calls from referees.

What is not acceptable is attempting to remove the role of the referee from the game. This is exactly what Kansas lawmakers are trying to do.

State legislators are attempting to pass an amendment to the Kansas Constitution that would abolish judicial review from education funding.

Judicial review is the process of courts deciding if something is legal according to both the state and federal constitution.

This amendment is in response to a line from Article Six of the Kansas constitution which reads "The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state."

The state of Kansas has been sued multiple times over the past 14 years for not meeting the burden of "suitable provision(s)" and the Kansas Supreme Court has directed legislators to increase school funding and to spend at least \$4,492 per student. This, however, has not stopped legislators from continuing to cut education.

Rather than address budget issues that have resulted from the economic downturn, legislators have decided to simply go around the court's rulings by attempting to pass this constitutional amendment which would remove the court's ability to oversee what the state of Kansas spends on education.

Removing judicial review would allow the Kansas government to place education funding at whatever levels they feel are

appropriate. In short, they will answer to no one.

Education levels would be set on whims and vary greatly depending on who is in office. Not only would lawmakers be eliminating the 'referee' but they would also take away any level of consistency on what schools are able to spend on their students. This goes against everything American democracy is based on.

Kansas politicians' blatant disregard for the system of checks and balances is only exceeded by their disregard for the voice of the people. The amendment recently passed the Senate and it now goes to the House where, if approved, the public must vote on the amendment in the primary elections instead of the general elections. Primary elections have historically low voter turnout and lawmakers are trying to sneak this grab for power by the general public.

While most of us enjoy engaging in the occasional "boos" at refs after a questionable call, our Kansas lawmakers have gone too far. If this amendment is passed teens who can vote need to send a message to legislators voting "No" to this amendment.

The state of Kansas cannot afford for its lawmakers to keep treating education funding like a game.



andersonwall {editorial cartoonist}

## Education spending, litigation timeline in Kansas

