

KS Chief Justice Nuss to step down

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Lawton Nuss plans to retire in December, giving Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly a second appointment on the court.

Nuss announced Friday that he plans to step down Dec. 17 after serving on the court since 2002 and as chief justice since 2010. He was an appointee of moderate Republican Gov. Bill Graves.

During the 66-year-old Nuss' tenure as chief justice, the seven-member court came under increasing criticism from conservative Republicans for rulings that overturned death sentences in capital murder cases and directed legislators to increase spending on public schools. And the court ruled in April that the state constitution protects abortion rights.

Nuss' announcement the same month Justice Lee Johnson announced plans to retire Sept. 8. Johnson was appointed by Democratic Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

Associated Press