



2022 - 2023 Executive board

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March 20, 2023 hearing on HB 2053, regarding rules and regulations for remote drop boxes – Proponent testimony

Chairman Thompson and Distinguished Members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association (KCCEOA). The KCCEOA is a statewide organization with 109 members including all county clerks and election commissioners in Kansas. Our duties are significant under statute and one of our most public facing functions is free and fair administration of elections. We take this duty very seriously. We prepare for every possible, and impossible, scenario which could occur.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the KCCEOA membership. We believe that the legislature sets the policy and we implement it. You pass the laws, the Secretary of State works with you to develop and adopt rules, and we follow the law and regulations in an attempt to allow the public to participate in free and fair elections while complying with your intent and the Secretary's guidance. We understand and agree with the intent to build on the already secure election processes in Kansas and increasing voter confidence. The KCCEOA prepared a legislative agenda which was developed through a policy committee process and agreed to by a majority of the members. One of the items specifically included is: "Maintain local control of usage and placement of drop boxes for advance ballots".

We believe that drop boxes for depositing advance ballots are an important tool for voters to ensure that their ballots are received by the election office. With delivery delays by the US Postal Service expected to continue, we believe that allowing ballots to be deposited in a secure drop box prior to the close of polls on Election Day is a good option for voters to return their ballots. County election offices should be allowed to place and utilize drop boxes appropriately for their jurisdiction following guidelines established by the Secretary of State.

We support authorizing the Secretary of State, after consultation with county election officers, to adopt rules and regulations for the use of remote drop boxes for the return of advance ballots. Our association members would be glad to assist the Secretary of State office with preparing workable guidelines and standards for the usage and placement of remote drop boxes.

The KCCEOA supports HB 2053 as currently presented. We ask that the committee pass this bill favorably. I will gladly stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Rick Piepho
Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair