Date: March 19, 2001

MINUTES OF THE ETHICS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Representative Tony Powell at 3:30 p.m. on March 7, 2001 in Room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Gwen Welshimer, Excused

Representative Carlos Mayans, Excused Representative Cindy Hermes, Excused Representative John Toplikar, Excused

Committee staff present: Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Shirley Weideman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

HB 2197 - Proponent: Representative Frank Miller

Opponent: Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

SB 126 - Proponents: Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Natalie Haag, Governor's Representative

SB 127 - Proponent: Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

Others attending: See attached list.

Chairman Powell opened the hearing on HB 2197 - Elections; removal from voter registration list.

Representative Frank Miller appeared before the committee as a proponent for <u>HB 2197</u>. He said that this is a bill concerning elections and the removal of voters names from the voter registration list. Representative Miller said he visited approximately 1000 homes and was surprised to discover that so many people listed on his copy of the voter registration list were no longer at the same address. He proposes adding a paragraph to K.S.A. 25-2316 (c) to state that the county elections officials remove a name from the voter registration list is they have not voted in the last two consecutive elections. Representative Miller answered question asked by committee members.

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State gave testimony in opposition to <u>HB 2197</u>. He said that the Voter Registration Act of 1993 prohibits the cancellation of a voter's registration for failure to vote, so that HB 2197 would violate Section 8(b)(2) of Public Law 103-31. In 1996, the Kansas Legislature passed HB 2079 to comply with the VRA of 1993. Mr. Bryant answered questions asked by committee members. He said that most states do not want to have one set of laws for federal elections and another set for state elections, so they have adopted the federal restrictions on removing voters names. He also answered that there may be a chance to put names in an inactive file, rather than complete removal. Mr. Bryant said that we would need criteria for an inactive list as it normally covers address changes. Anyone on the inactive list can still vote if they show up at the polls. He indicated that it would be helpful to have a statewide system of active/inactive voter lists. (attachment #1)

Hearing was closed on HB 2197.

The hearing was opened on SB 126 - Recount procedure for offices elected on statewide basis.

Natalie Haag, Governor's Representative, appeared before the committee in support of <u>SB 126</u>. She said that changes recommended by the Secretary of State are necessary to facilitate election recounts for those officials elected on a statewide basis as well as those elected to Congress. She proposed a balloon amendment to SB 126 which states that when a general election's returns are within one half of one percent or less of the total votes cast, the state will pay for the cost of the recount. This amendment will avoid the financial burden placed on one candidate when election results are extremely close. Ms. Haag

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Ethics and Elections Committee for March 7, 2001

said that this is not an automatic recount. Recounts would be done in the same manner as they were counted the first time and the state would pay. She said that if a candidate wanted a hand recount, the candidate would pay for it. Ms. Haag estimates that a whole state recount would cost between \$80,000 and \$100,000. She stood for questions from the committee. (attachment #2)

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, gave testimony in support of <u>SB 126</u>. He said that this bill would simplify the procedure for a candidate that requests a statewide recount. The request would be filed with the Secretary of State, who would direct the county election officers to conduct the recount and report the results. The person making the request would designate which counties to recount, the method of the recount and would post a bond to cover the costs of the recount if the election results are not reversed. He said that the major difference proposed by this bill is that the person making the request may make a single request rather than individual requests to each of the counties where they are requesting recounts. Mr. Bryant responded to questions asked by the committee. (attachment #3)

There being no further discussion, Chairman Powell closed the hearing on SB 126.

Chair Powell opened the hearing on SB 127 - Election procedures; petitions and advance voting.

The committees' attention was drawn to the written testimony of Representative Don Myers in favor of SB 127. (attachment #4)

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, appeared before the committee in support of SB 127. He said that Sections 1,2,3,7,8,9 and 10 would reduce the qualifications of petition circulators and bring the state laws into compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1999. He also said that petition circulators would be required to be residents of the state and possess the constitutional qualifications of a voter. To make all seven sections consistent, he offers amendments to accomplish the following:

1) section 4 of the bill would establish a procedure for county election officers to remove the names of persons who do not mark and return the ballots they are automatically mailed each election from the permanent advance voter list, 2) section 5 would allow an individual registered voter to make a written request for the county election officer to conceal the voter's address on the registration list if that request specified an invasion of privacy or a threat to that person's safety, and 3) section 6 would allow the use of the Social Security Administration's list of deceased persons to identify voter's names who should be deleted from the list. Mr. Bryant answered questions asked by committee members. (attachment #5)

There being no further discussion, hearing was closed on **SB 127**.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. Next scheduled meeting is March 12.

House Ethics and Elections

GUEST LIST Date March 7, 2001	
Your Name	Representing
Brad Bryant	Sec. of State
Natalie Haaq	Governor Office
Bruce Diminet	Governor Office Independent
	•

RON THORNBURGH Secretary of State



First Floor, Memorial Hall 120 SW 10th Ave. Topeka, KS 66612-1594 (785) 296-4564

House Committee on Ethics and Elections

Testimony on House Bill 2197

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Elections and Legislative Matters

March 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2197. We must oppose this bill because its passage would violate federal law. Specifically, it would violate Section 8(b)(2) of Public Law 103-31, which is also referred to as the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Section 8 of the NVRA prohibits the cancellation of a voter's registration for failure to vote. I have attached a photocopy.

HB 2197 would authorize the county election officer to cancel the registration of any voter who failed to vote in two consecutive general elections. The election officer would send a notice to the voter along with a new voter registration application form.

This is very similar to a provision in Kansas law before implementation of the NVRA. This so-called purge provision worked well and kept our voter lists cleaner than those in many states, and certainly cleaner than they are now. However, in 1996 the Kansas Legislature passed House Bill 2079 to comply with the NVRA. I have attached a photocopy of the relevant portion of HB 2079.

Although we favor enactment of a good purge law and we like the concept of HB 2197, its passage would return Kansas voter list maintenance procedures to pre-NVRA days and put us out of compliance with the federal law. For that reason alone we must recommend against passage of HB 2197.

We have lobbied the Kansas delegation in Congress and supported various legislative initiatives to amend the NVRA with regard to this provision and several others, but so far no such legislation has passed. If the NVRA is amended in the future to allow our state to implement more effective purge provisions, we will support those efforts.

Thank you for your consideration.

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House Ethics and Elections 3-7-01 Attachment 1

PUBLIC LAW 103-31—MAY 20, 1993

107 STAT. 83

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(C) in the case of registration at a voter registration agency, if the valid voter registration form of the applicant is accepted at the voter registration agency not later than the lesser of 30 days, or the period provided by State law, before the date of the election; and

(D) in any other case, if the valid voter registration form of the applicant is received by the appropriate State election official not later than the lesser of 30 days, or the period provided by State law, before the date of the election;

(2) require the appropriate State election official to send notice to each applicant of the disposition of the application;
(3) provide that the name of a registrant may not be

removed from the official list of eligible voters except—

(A) at the request of the registrant;

(B) as provided by State law, by reason of criminal conviction or mental incapacity; or

(C) as provided under paragraph (4);

(4) conduct a general program that makes a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters by reason of—

(A) the death of the registrant; or

(B) a change in the residence of the registrant, in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d);

(5) inform applicants under sections 5, 6, and 7 of-

(A) voter eligibility requirements; and

(B) penalties provided by law for submission of a false voter registration application; and

(6) ensure that the identity of the voter registration agency through which any particular voter is registered is not disclosed

to the public.

(b) CONFIRMATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION.—Any State program or activity to protect the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring the maintenance of an accurate and current voter registration roll for elections for Federal office—

(1) shall be uniform, nondiscriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.);

and

- (2) shall not result in the removal of the name of any person from the official list of voters registered to vote in an election for Federal office by reason of the person's failure to vote.
- (c) VOTER REMOVAL PROGRAMS.—(1) A State may meet the requirement of subsection (a)(4) by establishing a program under which—
 - (A) change-of-address information supplied by the Postal Service through its licensees is used to identify registrants whose addresses may have changed; and

(B) if it appears from information provided by the Postal

Service that—

(i) a registrant has moved to a different residence address in the same registrar's jurisdiction in which the registrant is currently registered, the registrar changes the registration records to show the new address and sends the registrant a notice of the change by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid pre-addressed return form by which

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changes residence from one place in a precinct to another place within the same precinct, if such voter is otherwise qualified to vote in the voting place within the precinct in which the current residence is located registrant has moved from an address on the registration book to another address within the county and has not reregistered, such voter registrant shall be allowed to vote a provisional ballot at any election in such precinct on the condition that such voter registers at such time by completing a registration eard, making an oath in the form prescribed by the secretary of state and providing proof of residence in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the secretary of state therefor. Such registration eard registrant first completes the application for registration prescribed by K.S.A. 25-2309, and amendments thereto. Completion of the application shall authorize the county election officer to ehange update the voter's registration records to reflect such change record, if appropriate, for voting in future elections. The county election officer shall send, by nonforwardable first-class mail, a new eertificate of registration notice of disposition to any such voter. Any person registering to vote at the polls as herein authorized shall be permitted to vote at such election. Whenever the county election officer receives from any other election officer a notice of registration of a voter in a different place than that shown in the records of the county election officer, such officer shall remove the name of such voter from the registration book and party affiliation list.

(c) Every application for registration completed under this section shall be returned to the county election officer with the registration books.

(e) (d) When a voter fails to vote at a general election at which members of the United States presidential electoral college are elected, such voter's name shall be subject to removal from the voter registration book and the party affiliation list in the manner provided in subsection (d). When a voter fails to vote at any other general election held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November in an even-numbered year, such voter's name may be subject to removal from the voter registration book and the party affiliation list in the manner provided in subsection (d) if the county election officer determines that the removal of the names of voters who failed to vote in such election is necessary to the maintenance of accurate voter registration records. A registrant shall not be removed from the registration list on the ground that the registrant has changed residence unless the registrant:

(1) Confirms in writing that the registrant has moved outside the county in which the registrant is registered, or registers to vote in any other jurisdiction; or

(2) has failed to respond to the notice described in subsection (e) and has not appeared to vote in an election during the period beginning on the date of the notice and ending on the day after the date of the second federal general election that occurs after the date of the notice.

(d) (e) When a voter's name is subject to removal from the registra-

tion book and the party affiliation list as provided in subsection (e), the county election officer shall attempt to notify such voter by first class mail at the mailing address specified in the registration book. Such notification shall advise that the registration books show that the person did not vote in the applicable November general election and that it is necessary to reregister if the residence of such person has changed. Such notification shall be mailed in an envelope or on a postcard which clearly indicates that it is not to be forwarded to another address. If such notification is not returned undelivered to the county election officer and no address correction which indicates that the voter has moved is received by the eounty election officer, the voter's name shall not be removed from the registration book or party affiliation list. If such notification is returned undelivered to the county election officer or if an address correction which indicates that the voter has moved is received by the county election officer, the county election officer shall check to verify that the mailing address on the notification is the same as that on the voter registration list. If it is determined that an error was made in addressing the notifieation, another notice shall be sent to the correct mailing address. If it is determined that no error was made in addressing the original notification or if the second notification is returned undelivered or an address correction is received therefor, the name of such person shall be stricken from the registration books and the party affiliation lists. A county election officer shall send a confirmation notice upon which a registrant may state such registrant's current address, within 45 days of the following events:

(1) A notice of disposition of an application for voter registration is

returned as undeliverable;

(2) change of address information supplied by the National Change of Address program identifies a registrant whose address may have changed;

(3) if it appears from information provided by the postal service that a registrant has moved to a different residence address in the county in

which the registrant is currently registered; or

(4) if it appears from information provided by the postal service that a registrant has moved to a different residence address outside the county in which the registrant is currently registered.

The confirmation notice shall be sent by forwardable mail and shall include a postage prepaid and preaddressed return card in a form pre-

scribed by the chief state election official.

(e) (f) Except as otherwise provided by law, when a voter dies or is disqualified for voting, the registration of the voter shall be void, and the county election officer shall remove such voter's name from the registration books and the party affiliation lists. Whenever (1) an obituary notice appears in a newspaper having general circulation in the county reports the death of a registered voter, or (2) a registered voter requests in writing that such voter's name be removed from registration, or (3) a court of

STATE OF KANSAS

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Before the House Ethics and Elections Committee March 7, 2001 Testimony by Natalie G. Haag Chief Legal Counsel and Director of Governmental Affairs

Senate Bill 126

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Governor Graves in support of Senate Bill 126. The changes recommended by the Secretary of State are necessary to facilitate election recounts for those officials elected on a statewide basis.

As a former Secretary of State, Governor Graves watched with interest the vote recounting efforts in the recent presidential election. Closer to home, the Governor watched the back and forth results in the Ames/Williams race in the 8th House District. The unfairness of requiring either one of those parties to accept fiscal responsibility for the recount when the election continued to switch between the two, became one of the reasons behind the Governor's consideration of a mandatory recount bill.

In lieu of Senate Bill 256, which had a mandatory recount provision, the Governor is requesting a balloon amendment to Senate Bill 126. The balloon amendment states that when a general election's returns are within one half of one percent or less of the total votes cast, that the state will pay for the cost of the recount. This avoids the financial burden placed on one candidate when election results are extremely close.

Governor Graves requests your support for Senate Bill 126 and the proposed balloon amendment attached hereto.

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optical scanning systems as defined in K.S.A. 25-4601 et seq., and amendments thereto, or electronic or electromechanical voting systems, as defined in K.S.A. 25-4401, and amendments thereto, the method of conducting the recount shall be at the discretion of the person requesting such recount. The county election officer shall not be a member of such special election board. Before the special election board meets to recount the ballots upon a properly filed request, the party who makes the request shall file with the county election officer a bond, with security to be approved by the county or district attorney, conditioned to pay all costs incurred by the county in making such recount. In the event that the candidate requesting the recount is declared the winner of the election as a result of the recount, or if as a result of the recount a question submitted is overturned, no action shall be taken on the person's bond and the county shall bear the costs incurred for the recount. Any recount requested must be requested in writing of and filed with the county election officer not later than 12:00 noon on the Monday following the election. The request shall specify which voting areas are to be recounted. The county election officer shall immediately notify any candidate involved in the election for which such recount is requested, or shall notify the county chairperson of each candidates party. Any such recount shall be initiated not later than the following day and shall be completed not later than the Friday of such week at 5:00 p.m. Upon completion of any recount under this subsection, the election board shall package and reseal the ballots as provided by law and the county board of canvassers shall complete its canvass. The members of the special election board shall be paid as prescribed in K.S.A. 25-2811 and amendments thereto for time actually spent making the recount.

(c) A candidate for state or national office elected on a statewide basis, including the offices of president and vice president of the United States and representatives in congress to which the state may be entitled at the time of such election, may request a recount in one or more counties. Any such recount must be requested in writing and filed with the secretary of state not later than 12:00 noon on the Monday following the election and shall specify which counties are to be recounted. If a recount is required in a county that uses optical scanning systems as defined in K.S.A. 25-4601, and amendments thereto, or electronic or electromechanical voting systems, as defined in K.S.A. 25-4401, and amendments thereto, the method of conducting the recount shall be at the discretion of the person requesting such recount.) The person requesting the recount shall file with the secretary of state a bond, with security to be approved by the secretary of state, conditioned to pay all costs incurred by the counties and the secretary of state in making such recount. The amount of the bond shall be determined by the secretary of state. In the

Except when a recount occurs as provided in subsection (d), the

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event that the candidate requesting the recount is declared the winner of the election as a result of the recount, no action shall be taken on the candidate's bond and the counties shall bear the costs incurred for the recount.

The secretary of state immediately shall notify each county election officer affected by the recount and any candidate involved in the election for which such recount is requested, or . If the candidate cannot be reached, then the secretary of state shall notify the state chairperson of each such candidate's party. Any such recount shall be conducted under the supervision of the county election officers at the direction of the secretary of state, and shall be initiated not later than the following day and shall be completed not later than the Friday of such week at 5:00 p.m. Each county election officer involved in the recount shall appoint a special election board to recount the ballots. The members of the special election board shall be paid as prescribed in K.S.A. 25-2811 and amendments thereto for time actually spent making the recount. Upon completion of any recount under this subsection, the special election board in each county shall package and reseal the ballots as provided by law and the county board of canvassers shall complete its canvass. The county election officer in each county immediately shall certify the results of the recount to the secretary of state. L

- Sec. 2. K.S.A. 25-3107 is hereby repealed.
- Sec. 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

(d) Whenever the general election returns for any office listed in subsection (c) reflect that a candidate for such office was defeated by one-half of one percent or less of the total number of votes cast, the state shall bear the cost of any recount performed using the method by which such ballots were counted originally.

RON THORNBURGH Secretary of State



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House Committee on Ethics and Elections

Testimony on Senate Bill 126

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Elections and Legislative Matters

March 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 126. This bill was proposed by the Secretary of State to create a mechanism for the recount of ballots in elections for offices elected on a statewide basis. Although a statewide recount is technically possible under current law, this bill would make the process less cumbersome for persons requesting recounts, and it would provide central authority to oversee the recounts in the various counties.

Under this legislation, a candidate in an election for statewide office could file a request for a recount with the Secretary of State. The person making the request would designate which counties to recount, the method of the recount (hand recount or optical scan), and would post a bond to cover the costs of the recount if the election results are not reversed.

The Secretary of State would direct the county election officers to conduct the recount and report the results. The timing is the same under this bill as it is under current law for recounts. The deadline to make the request is noon the Monday following the election, and the deadline for completion of the recount is the following Friday.

The major difference proposed by this bill is that the person making the request may make a single request rather than individual requests to each of the counties that they are requesting to be recounted.

In the wake of the recount problems in the 2000 presidential election, many states are responding to the public outcry by reviewing, among other things, their recount procedures. Although statewide recounts are rare, we propose adoption of a procedure to allow them when they are needed. We urge passage of SB 126 to provide that procedure.

Thank you for your consideration.

House Ethics and Elections

3-7-01

Attachment 3

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STATE OF KANSAS

DON MYERS

REPRESENTATIVE 82ND DISTRICT SEDGWICK COUNTY 613 BRIARWOOD DERBY, KANSAS 67037 (316: 788-0014 HOME

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Senate Bill 127

Testimony provided to House Ethics and Elections

March 7, 2001

Thank you for receiving my written testimony regarding SB 127. This weekend I was contacted by a young policeman who was challenged at the county court house by a man who has a long criminal record. The man is just a bad egg with a history of assault. The policeman was able to talk the man into submission.

The young policeman thinks that he has arrested this man in the past and having a young family does not care for this man or any-other person to be able to find out his home address.

He is aware that SB 127 would allow any registered voter to have their name removed by a written notice to the county election commissioner. He strongly agrees with the piece of Legislation.

I urge your support of this section of the bill. The privacy of persons should be respected, especially those whose safety maybe in jeopardy.

Don Myers

State Rep

RON THORNBURGH Secretary of State



First Floor, Memorial Hall 120 SW 10th Ave. Topeka, KS 66612-1594 (785) 296-4564

House Committee on Ethics and Elections

Testimony on Senate Bill 127

Brad Bryant, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Elections and Legislative Matters

March 7, 2001

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee in support of Senate Bill 127. This bill was proposed by the Secretary of State as an election administration bill. You will note that the Senate amended the bill twice, and we support both amendments. As amended, the bill would accomplish four things.

1. Sections 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 would reduce the qualifications of petition circulators. We are proposing this to bring our state laws into compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the 1999 case of *Buckley v. American Constitutional Law Foundation*. According to that decision, states may no longer impose qualifications such as voter registration and residence in the county on petition circulators. These provisions in Kansas law are no longer enforceable, and this bill would repeal them. The *Buckley* decision does allow states to require petition circulators to be residents of the state.

Our research indicates that the *Buckley* decision also does not prohibit states from requiring petition circulators to possess the constitutional qualifications of voters, although we may not require actual voter registration. The Senate amended Sections 1 and 3 of SB 127 to require that. We support the amendments and recommend for consistency's sake that the same language be amended into Sections 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the bill. I have attached suggested language for the committee's consideration.

2. Section 4 of the bill would establish a procedure for county election officers to remove from the permanent advance voter list the names of persons who do not mark and return the ballots they are automatically mailed each election.

Current law allows a person with a permanent illness or disability to apply for permanent advance voter status. The county election officer maintains a list of permanent advance voters and mails them ballots before each election.

Some of these voters are on the list for many years, and some of them stop returning their ballots. Current law provides no mechanism for removing their names from the list if they become

House Ethics and Elections

3-7-01

Attachment 5

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inactive voters. This bill would allow the county election officer to mail a notice to any such voter who misses two consecutive general elections. The notice would allow the permanent advance voter a 30-day opportunity to renew their application for permanent status. If they fail to do so, their name would be removed from the list. This provision would not affect the person's voter registration or right to vote.

- 3. Section 5 of SB 127 would allow an individual registered voter to make a written request for the county election officer to conceal the voter's address on the registration list. The request must specify an invasion of privacy or a threat to the person's safety to justify the request. This proposal is made to address the needs of law enforcement personnel, judges and crime victims who have reason to fear reprisals from criminals who may discover their residence addresses from public records.
- 4. At the Secretary of State's request, the Senate amended Section 6 into SB 127 to provide election officers with an additional tool to clean up the voter registration list. Section 6 would allow the use of the Social Security Administration's list of deceased persons to identify voters whose names should be deleted from the list. Current law requires the state Bureau of Vital Statistics to send lists of deceased persons to each county, but using the Social Security list would broaden the effectiveness of the program. The state's death list is sometimes inadequate if a voter dies in a different place from where they were registered to vote. Further, it does not allow effective tracking of deceased persons across state lines. The process of cancelling the registrations of deceased persons would be improved through the use of lists purchased from the Social Security Administration. We proposed this amendment to the bill in the Senate and recommend its inclusion as this committee considers SB 127.

We urge the committee to amend SB 127 as suggested and report it favorably for passage. Thank you for your consideration.

Office of the Secretary of State

Proposed Amendments to SB 127-- Petition Circulators' Qualifications

1. Section 2, page 4, line 40: Insert after "Kansas": "and has the qualifications of an elector in the state of Kansas," 2. Section 7, page 14, line 8: Insert after "Kansas": "possessing the qualifications of an elector in the state of Kansas" 3. Section 8, page 15, line 2: Insert after "Kansas": "with the qualifications of electors in the state of Kansas," and in line 6: Insert after "Kansas": "with the qualifications of electors in the state of Kansas" 4. Section 9, page 15, line 16: Insert after "Kansas": "and has the qualifications of an elector in the state of Kansas" 5. Section 10, page 16, line 4: Insert after "Kansas": "and shall have the qualifications of an elector in the state of Kansas"