

SESSION OF 2008

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 558

As Amended by House Committee on
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Brief*

SB 558 would amend a statute that pertains to irrigation district elections. Specifically, the amendment would allow the district board of directors to adopt a procedure providing for the election of board of directors members by mail ballot. The procedure would require the board to mail ballots to all persons entitled to vote, receive and tabulate ballots, canvass the elections, and certify the results to the county election officer. The irrigation district would be responsible for the direct expenses of the election. The ballot mailing would have to contain a declaration indicating that the person signing is a qualified owner of irrigable land in the district.

The bill also would clarify the law by replacing the word "absentee" with "advance."

Background

During the hearing on the bill in the Senate, the sponsor explained the bill and the reason for its introduction. A representative of Bostwick Irrigation District #2 told the Committee that, over the years, the laws and other circumstances have changed, resulting in making it difficult for some voters to vote in person. Some voters are elderly. Others do not reside within the district proper, and the district would like to make participation in district elections more accessible to voting.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

At the hearing before the House Committee, conferees included representatives of Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District #2 and the Kansas Secretary of State's Office. The representative of the Secretary of State's Office testified as a neutral party. Written testimony was provided by Senator Taddiken. There were no opponents.

The representative of the Secretary of State's Office submitted a balloon on the bill to clarify the responsibility the board of directors of the irrigation district has when having a mail-in ballot election. The proposed amendment deleted the reference to the Mail Ballot Election Act. The House Committee adopted the proposed language from the representative of the Secretary of State's Office, including replacing the word "absentee" with "advance."

The fiscal note on the original bill indicates the Department of Agriculture believes there would be no fiscal effect associated with enactment. There would be additional costs to affected counties, but it is not possible to estimate such costs.