

**March 9, 2023**

**Testimony to the House Elections Committee**

**NAME:** Amy Hinrichs

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 209, requiring mail ballots by 7 pm Election Day

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 209.

Voting in Kansas is safe and effective as indicated by our very own Secretary of State. I've voted by mail, and I appreciate the ability to vote when it is convenient. However, for some people it isn't an issue of convenience. It is a necessity to be able to vote. The current 3-day grace period allows voters, the USPS, and election clerks much needed flexibility to ensure all votes are appropriately counted.

Voting by mail is a safe and effective way for Kansans to cast their ballot. According to Mainstream Coalition, "In the 2022 elections, 41% of Kansans voted by mail. In 2020, 459,229 individuals returned advance by mail ballots. Over 32,000 of those ballots were received within the current 3-day voter protection period that this bill proposes to remove. There is no evidence that these 32,000 ballots were cast illegally, incorrectly, or with intent to cause fraud. If the voter protection period did not exist, over 32,000 Kansans would have had their vote disqualified - for no valid reason at all."

Some of the rule areas in Kansas send their mail out of state for processing. If a voter mailed their ballot on a Friday before an election, their ballot has a good chance of being thrown out due to the postal service lag time. This bill would punish a voter for a process they have no control over and possibly disenfranchising thousands of voters. A 3-day grace period helps to ensure these votes are counted.

A voter who mails their ballot prior to the election deadline assumes their vote will be counted as they should. There are many reasons a ballot might be delayed by the post office such as a shortage of funding, lack of personnel, bad weather, etc.

Johnson County has had a robust vote by mail system for years. No problems or issues have presented themselves. Voting should allow for the will of the people, and the government should do what it can to ensure access for all people. Eliminating the 3-day grace period will disenfranchise thousands of voters who have done everything correctly. Please vote no on bill SB 209.

Amy Hinrichs

Olathe, KS