

March 7, 2023

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House Committee on Elections  
Kansas Legislature  
Topeka, KS

Attn: Dana Rooney, Committee Assistant  
[Dana.Rooney@house.ks.gov](mailto:Dana.Rooney@house.ks.gov)

Re: Testimony against Senate Bill 209, requiring all advance voting ballots to be returned by 7PM on election day.

Advance voting offers those unable to physically present to the election precinct the opportunity to participate in the election process. As the immediate past-Mayor of Salina, KS I have witnessed the uptick in civic pride and responsiveness when a person feels their vote matters. There are situations in which a voter knows ahead of time that they will not be able to cast that vote in person. Students, those recuperating from surgery or illness, and our gainfully employed who must be out of town for work all have the safety net of the advanced ballot.

The U.S.P.S., for logistical and economic reasons, has reduced the number of sites at which mail is "processed" locally. Mail in Salina (the tenth largest city in the State) is processed in Wichita, whether it's going next door or across the ocean. Anyone in an institution or traveling may have additional layers of handling before the envelope reaches the postal service. This has caused municipalities to have to add more time for fulfilling legal notice requirements.

In a State where voter turnout has at times been embarrassingly low over the past two decades (particularly on the local level), our Secretary of State and Elections Commissions should be judged by voter participation and efficiency of the voting process, not by how many ballots throw out. Hard data, and the opinions of our statewide elections officials, have refuted the claims of widespread voter fraud. Our focus should be on getting our citizens to register, and our registered voters to vote.

Vote by mail events have been widely popular in increasing voter participation and supporting election results as a true mandate of the people, as opposed to the wishes of a paltry 17-27% of the electorate. The intent of the voter should be rewarded with the ballot postmarked by the election day. Our soldiers overseas are afforded the same courtesy. The variances and vagaries of our trusted USPS should not penalize those of us wanting to participate in the voting process.

Sincerely,

Trent W. Davis, M.D.