

March 9, 2023

Testimony to the House Elections Committee

NAME: Sara Lancaster

TITLE: Kansas resident

EMAIL ADDRESS: [your email address]

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

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Committee Chair and Committee members,

My two children are college students at the University of Iowa. They both voted absentee in the general election this past fall, but my son was pushing getting his ballot back on time.

As a freshman, with a 17 semester hour schedule, he had a lot on his plate. I had printed off the application to receive a mail in ballot for him and left it with him in the fall on a trip to Iowa City along with a couple of stamps. As the election was getting closer, I'd ask him when we would talk whether he'd gotten his application mailed in yet, and continually got "not yet". In response.

The day before or the day of the deadline to mail in the request for a ballot arrived, and he was in a panic. He didn't have any stamps (he'd given the ones I had left for him to someone on his dorm floor who needed them). Where could he buy stamps?!? Apparently not in the dorm, so he had to walk 5 or 6 blocks downtown to a Target to buy some stamps. Then he had to figure out where he deposited outgoing mail. There aren't a lot of big blue mailboxes around anymore, particularly not on campus, and he doesn't have a car there. He eventually got it figured out, but we all crossed our fingers that the ballot would get back to him on time, navigating the University/dormitory mail delivery system, on top of an already slow system to allow him to get his ballot returned in time. Thankfully it did and was counted, but it easily could have missed the deadline, partly because the ballots aren't even sent out until right before the election. He made the comment to me, "No wonder only people above the age of 70 vote. They make the process so difficult!"

Please oppose the removal of the three day voter protection period. Vote no to protect the rights of our young people who are seeking college educations away from home, care enough to send in an application for and then mail-in a ballot.

Given the short window between when those ballots are mailed to the voter and when they need to be returned, and given the disruption and chaos in today's postal service, please respect the efforts of those who are making an effort to figure it out, find and buy stamps, find an outgoing mail slot and trusting in the efficiency of the student dorm employees and USPS. Please give them through the date of the election to return their ballot in the mail and give it 3 days to arrive. After the extra efforts they have to go to in order to get a mail in ballot and send it in, please let their vote count and their voice be heard.

Please vote no on this bill.

Thank you,

Sara Lancaster
Overland Park