

**Senate Federal and State Affairs
March 21st, 2023
Room 144-S
Proponent Testimony for SB 321
David Soffer
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Dear Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is David Soffer and I am a resident of Overland Park. Many of you know me through my time working for Governor Jeff Colyer and my time working in the Kansas Department of Commerce under Governor Laura Kelly. I am representing every Sabbath observant Jew residing in Kansas today to stand in support of SB 321. Currently, caucuses for presidential primaries have been held on Saturdays. This presents a significant challenge to Sabbath observant Jews. The Sabbath, is a day where Jews do not do any activity that would be considered work. This would include anything from using a pen, to driving a car, to using a phone etc. Voting, unfortunately, would be considered one of those activities. While our community is always a strong proponent of getting out to the polls and Jewish law advocates strongly on the importance of voting, we can't violate the Sabbath for voting, or any activity that does not involve lifesaving actions (for instance our doctors use phones or work on the Sabbath).

SB 321 would create a primary system and enable absentee ballots for presidential elections. This means that if either party chose to still have a Saturday primary, we could vote absentee ballot, something that was not afforded to our community through standard rules in the caucus process. Changing this rule would allow Sabbath observant Jews, the opportunity to vote for their presidential selection. This has always been something of great importance to our community and would be a welcome change to many of us who appreciate our right to vote.

We are all people of faith, something this entire committee can appreciate. We are also law-abiding Americans, some as Republicans and some as Democrats. We all support the change in SB 321 to move the current system to a primary election and our community urges this committee to move this bill out favorable for passage with this change.