

SESSION OF 2024

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2516

As Amended by House Committee on Elections

Brief*

HB 2516, as amended, would change the number of signatures required for nomination petitions for independent candidates for statewide office from 5,000 signatures to at least 2 percent of the total vote cast for all candidates for the office of Governor in the state in the last preceding general election.

[*Note:* Based on the number of total votes cast for Governor in the last preceding election in 2022, the number of required signatures would currently be approximately 20,180 voters. This is the same signature requirement for a political party seeking official recognition.]

The bill would prohibit an independent candidate from paying a filing fee to run for statewide office rather than utilizing the nomination petition process.

The bill would also make technical amendments.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Elections at the request of Representative Waggoner.

*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>

House Committee on Elections

In the House Committee hearing, written-only **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Mason.

Opponent testimony was provided by a representative of Loud Light Civic Action, who stated the bill would make the nomination petition process more burdensome for independent candidates and election administrators and discussed concerns about consolidating power in the political parties when numerous Kansans are not affiliated with political parties.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by a representative of the Libertarian Party of Kansas and two private citizens.

Neutral testimony was provided by a representative of the Office of Secretary of State (Secretary).

The House Committee amended the bill to require nomination petitions for independent candidates to be signed by at least 2 percent of the total vote cast for all candidates for the office of Governor in the state in the last preceding general election. [Note: The bill, as introduced, would have required a minimum of 25,000 signatures of qualified voters on nominating petitions for independent candidates for statewide office.]

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the Secretary indicates enactment of the bill would increase staff time to process 25,000 signatures instead of 5,000 signatures. The agency would implement the bill using existing resources. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2025 Governor's Budget Report*.

The Kansas Association of Counties indicates enactment of the bill would not have a fiscal effect on the counties.

Elections; independent candidates; statewide office; nomination petitions; Secretary of State