

## **Opponent Written Testimony on House Bill 2438**

House Committee on Elections

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To Chair Proctor and members of the committee,

### **Citizen Participation is Crucial to our Democracy**

Online tools that help citizens register to vote and participate in elections are a key factor in ensuring civic engagement – it increases the accessibility of registering, checking one's registration, and updating one's registration. The ease of this tool does not present a security risk or incentive for election tampering, instead it provides a safe, secure, and far easier way for Kansans to do their civic duty and vote. In 2020, when voter turnout was at its highest in the last decade, **only 2/3** of Kansans showed up at the polls. In 2022, that number was **less than 50%** ([Ballotpedia.org/ voter\\_turnout\\_in\\_Kansas](https://ballotpedia.org/voter_turnout_in_Kansas)). We should be encouraging our fellow Kansans to utilize their unique and powerful right to vote for what matters to them, and this bill seeks to further inhibit voter turnout, thereby negatively impacting the crucial lawmaking and election process.

### **Hurting Rural Kansas**

By introducing a bill that seeks to kill such a critical and helpful civic tool, you are directly impacting rural Kansan voters. People in rural communities don't have easy, immediate access to their local voter registration office. Could you imagine driving for over an hour each way just to double-check that you're still registered, when you could do it in mere minutes for free online using a tool that's been trusted for nearly a decade? Imagine how much this one scenario alone discourages rural voters from doing their civic duty and voting in their best interests. It's your duty as representatives to encourage the civic process, not hinder it.

### **Politically Driven Timing**

It comes as no coincidence to anyone that this bill is being introduced during an election year. Instead of encouraging greater participation in our democracy, it is clear that politicians are seeking to sway the system in their favor. Changing voter registration rules and tools for access before an election is not only a blatant attack on the election system, but a shameful tactic to silence voters. Furthermore, the fact that this bill would go into effect **immediately** without further clarification on regulations for online registration tools moving forward illustrates that this is a flagrant attempt at suppressing Kansan voices.

## Conclusion

One of the biggest problems across the nation is the lack of voter turnout, especially in local elections. House Bill 2438 is a bill that seeks to **eliminate** all the strides we have made to help **solve that problem**. HB 2438 seeks to make voter registration more difficult, suppress Kansas voices and demands, and specifically target rural Kansan voters. Do committee members believe that more engagement in the democratic process is a bad thing? Do you not believe in and trust the democratic election process that America was founded upon? If you support fair elections and increasing voter turnout for eligible citizens, I implore you to oppose HB 2438. Thank you for your consideration.