



Written Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2452

By Amanda Stanley, Asst. City Attorney
Kansas House Committee on Elections

Chairman Proctor and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the City of Olathe in opposition to House Bill 2452.

A primary reason the City of Olathe supports continuing odd-numbered year municipal elections is that they keep the focus squarely on local issues. When city elections occur in odd years, voters are making decisions based on city services, infrastructure, public safety, land use, taxes, and quality-of-life concerns—not national or statewide partisan dynamics. This focus benefits voters, candidates, and local accountability.

Even-year ballots are already crowded with high-profile federal and statewide races. In those cycles, municipal candidates and issues are often overshadowed, reducing meaningful engagement with the decisions that most directly affect residents' daily lives. Odd-year elections ensure that voters have the space and attention to evaluate city leadership based on performance, priorities, and local needs.

The City of Olathe is a city of the first class with a long-established system of staggered terms of office, adopted through our city charter. While the Legislature has historically set the timing of elections, cities retain local authority over how those elections are structured, including staggering and continuity of leadership. House Bill 2452 would significantly disrupt that locally adopted framework.

It is also important to note that within the last decade, Kansas cities—including Olathe—undertook a major transition when municipal elections were shifted from the spring to the fall. That change required substantial administrative work, public education, and cost, but it resulted in a stable system where voters now expect to go to the polls every November, not just every other year.

HB 2452 would once again change the rules midstream. Requiring municipal elections to occur only in even-numbered years would:

- Undermine the effectiveness of staggered terms adopted locally

- Potentially require extending or shortening terms of office
- Disrupt voter expectations and reduce consistency in civic participation
- Limit opportunities for voters to engage in municipal decision-making by eliminating odd-year elections altogether

Frequent changes to election timing are not beneficial for voters. Stability and predictability increase participation and confidence in the electoral process. Continually moving local elections—first from spring to fall, and now from odd years to even years—creates confusion and disengagement rather than clarity.

Olathe's staggered, odd-year elections also provide practical governance benefits:

- Continuity and institutional knowledge on the governing body
- Reduced risk of complete turnover during periods of growth and long-term capital planning
- Deliberate, issue-focused local elections that are not eclipsed by state and national campaigns

The City of Olathe does not oppose even-year elections as a concept. If a community believes alignment with even years is beneficial, Kansas law already allows for that choice at the local level. House Bill 2452 instead imposes a uniform mandate regardless of whether it improves voter understanding, engagement, or governance in a particular city.

Finally, HB 2452 would impose unfunded costs on cities, including charter and ordinance changes, election administration adjustments, and renewed voter education efforts—without a demonstrated statewide benefit.

For these reasons, the City of Olathe respectfully urges the Committee to oppose House Bill 2452. Odd-year municipal elections play an important role in keeping local issues front and center for voters, preserving stable governance structures, and maintaining a predictable and trusted election system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.