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Testimony to the House Committee on Elections

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TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

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BILL NUMBER: ***HB 2452, AN ACT concerning elections; changing the timing of municipality elections for cities, school districts, community colleges and certain other municipalities to fall in even-numbered years; requiring terms of office to be either two years or four years.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Chair Proctor & Members of the Committee,

I oppose HB 2452. Granted, the ALEC website, where boilerplate legislation for this concept originates, makes two intriguing arguments for moving local elections to even numbered years. Sponsors of this bill postulate this would create higher-turnout and increase participation in local races because fewer separate election dates might actually reduce “election fatigue because it would just be more convenient for people.”

A second argument for this change aligning election timing is that it will be a cost-saving measure as well, “... since local governments spend a lot of money on elections — things like paper, electricity and staffing. More staffing is important for election security,” adds ALEC.

Local elections are about schools, utilities, zoning, potholes and public safety. Putting those local control issues and candidates at the end of already much longer presidential and midterm cycle ballots will challenge the most diligent voter to research local issues and candidates.

Costs will likely skyrocket for everyone, if not local election clerks. Even-year cycles dominate media markets, with national politics crowding out substance and debate for most local issues. It's clear local elections would cause increased competition in the attention marketplace, leaving small campaigns at competitive disadvantage for social media buys, traditional airwaves and print media, to say nothing of limiting participation in local debates and forums.

As the political space grows more complex, and noisy, fewer voters tune in because they don't want to be overwhelmed. Keeping local elections to odd-numbered, off-cycle years does really realize more informed voters and opportunity to engage them all the way to the polls. Vote NO on HB2452.

Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7