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January 22, 2026 - Kansas House Elections Committee hearing on HB 2452, changing the timing of municipal elections to even-numbered years – Opponent testimony

Chairman Proctor and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association (KCCEOA). The KCCEOA is a statewide organization with 109 members, including all county clerks and election commissioners in Kansas. Our members are responsible for administering voter registration and elections at the local level and are committed to ensuring elections that are free, fair, secure, and efficiently administered.

I am submitting this **opposition testimony** on behalf of the KCCEOA membership regarding **HB 2452**. The KCCEOA prepared a legislative agenda which was developed through a policy committee process and agreed to by a majority of the members. One of the items specifically included in that agenda is: "Maintain the status quo with regard to election, registration and canvass schedules...". The intent of this testimony is to provide information from an election administration perspective and to outline general administrative and voter-facing considerations related to the bill as introduced.

HB 2452 would combine non-partisan municipal elections currently conducted in odd-numbered years with federal, state, judicial retention, county, township elections conducted in even-numbered years, significantly increasing the number and variety of contests on a single ballot.

KCCEOA anticipates significant administrative and operational challenges and issues with implementing this legislation. We understand the desire to increase vote totals for municipal elections by including these races on the ballot of higher turnout elections, but from an election administration perspective, we do not believe this legislation achieves that goal without creating significant operational risk. Some of the factors to consider are:

- Combining these elections would significantly increase ballot-style complexity, administrative workload, and operational risks, increasing the likelihood of problems at the polls.
 - The total number of contests, candidates and questions would cause the size of ballots to be increased and/or require multiple sheets per voter. There are only so many words that can be fit on a page of paper while still maintaining a usable format. Multi-sheet ballots are difficult to create and administer.
 - Very long or multi-sheet ballots will result in increased voter confusion, fatigue, and undervoting or down ballot drop-off where votes are not cast for candidates or contests that are further from the top of the ballot or less important to the voter.
 - City and School district boundaries rarely align with the traditional precincts used in even-year elections so the number of ballot styles would increase exponentially to accommodate the differences in representation for the voters in each unique geographical area.
 - Primary elections would be much more complex and costly since even-year primary elections are partisan. Non-partisan municipal district races requiring a primary would have to be added to the ballots of each major party. Also, an additional ballot would need to be created for each precinct/district for the voters affiliated with parties who do not conduct a primary and unaffiliated voters who do not wish to declare a party.
- Costs would be shifted – not reduced, resulting in every-other year, feast-or-famine budgets for election offices. More complex ballots and additional poll workers could increase costs in some areas.

- Consistent schedules for voters—and for election administrators—are an important factor. Currently voters know that an election is conducted in early November of every year. Turnout for odd-year municipal elections has increased since they were moved from spring to fall in 2015.
- In odd-numbered years the only option for districts wanting to conduct a special election would be the first Tuesday after March 1.
- The terms of officials elected in 2027 or who take office in 2027 are defined, but the terms of those elected in 2025 to four-year terms need to be defined. Also, some cities choose to have their newly elected officers take office in December of the year elected instead of the second Monday in January, so provisions should be adjusted accordingly.

The KCCEOA opposes House Bill 2452 as currently presented. We ask that the committee hear our concerns and act accordingly. I will gladly stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Thank you for your consideration,



Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair