

Caitlin DeFilippo

House Bill 2452 - Opposition Written Testimony Only

House Elections Committee

January 20, 2026

Dear Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to **House Bill 2452**.

While the stated goal of increasing voter participation is a noble one, HB 2452 is the wrong mechanism for achieving it. By consolidating local municipal and school board elections into even-numbered years alongside high-profile federal and state races, this bill risks drowning out local issues and undermining the nonpartisan nature of our local governance.

We urge the committee to consider the following concerns:

1. Increased "Ballot Drop-off" and Voter Fatigue

Even-year ballots in Kansas are already extensive, featuring races for President, U.S. Senate, Congress, and State Legislature. Adding Mayoral, City Council, and School Board races creates a "ballot marathon" that leads to **ballot drop-off**—a documented phenomenon where voters, exhausted by the sheer volume of choices, stop voting before reaching the bottom of the ballot.

2. Nationalization of Local Issues

Local elections are currently a time for communities to focus on the "pavement and pediatrics" of government: roads, zoning, utilities, and school curricula. Moving these to even-numbered years forces local candidates to compete with the billion-dollar marketing machines of national presidential and congressional campaigns. In this environment, voters are more likely to rely on **partisan cues** rather than researching the specific, nonpartisan qualifications of a local school board member or city commissioner.

3. Media and Engagement "Blackout"

During even-year cycles, local media outlets are saturated with advertising and coverage of federal races. This leaves little airtime or print space for substantive discussion of local governance. Community forums and candidate debates—critical for the health of a small-town democracy—will struggle to find a place on the calendar or capture public attention when pitted against the frenzy of a midterm or presidential election.

4. Voter Overwhelm and Communication Fatigue

Kansans already express significant frustration with the deluge of phone calls, text messages, and campaign mailers that accompany federal elections. HB 2452 would add another layer of local campaign outreach to this existing noise. Rather than increasing engagement, this "noise floor" often causes voters to "tune out" entirely, leading to a less informed and more cynical electorate.

Conclusion Local government is the level of democracy that most directly impacts the daily lives of Kansans. It deserves its own dedicated space on the calendar, free from the distractions of national partisan warfare. We believe HB 2452 will dilute the focus of our local elections and ultimately harm the quality of our local representation.

We respectfully ask that you do not recommend HB 2452 for passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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