

OVERLAND PARK

City Hall
8500 Santa Fe Drive
Overland Park, Kansas 66212
www.opkansas.org

Date: January 20, 2026

To: Chairman Proctor & the House Committee on Elections

From: City of Overland Park

Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2452

Thank you for allowing the City of Overland Park to submit testimony in opposition to HB 2452. The City opposes this bill because placing municipal elections on the same ballot as state and federal elections would diminish the ability of residents to focus on local issues.

Creating an election environment that makes it harder to focus on individual races is not good public policy, and that is why the vast majority of American cities hold off-cycle elections. Combining most elections on one ballot would make it more difficult for local candidates to raise money, schedule forums and debates, and find room in cluttered yards for their campaign signs. Right now, because local elections are the only elections happening in odd-years, local newspapers and other media outlets are covering the issues that are important in local communities.

Research indicates combining elections actually leads to an increase in the incumbency rate of local candidates because it decreases attention on local races.¹ Specifically, placing local races on the ballot with a large group of other races causes voters to just pick the names they recognize, rather than select the local candidates most aligned with their viewpoints.

If local elections were combined with state and national elections, counties would likely have to distribute two ballots to each voter. This will increase the likelihood of error, ballot fatigue, and under-voting. The percentage of voters who vote on races decreases as you move down a ballot, and adding city races to the same ballot as state and national races will only compound that problem. Additionally, time-strapped county officials will be less able to inform local candidates about filing deadlines, campaign finance laws, statements of substantial interest, and other information.

Thank you for allowing the City to testify on this legislation. We respectfully request that the Committee not advance HB 2452 to the full House.

¹ Oliver, J. Eric and Shang E. Ha. 2007. "Vote Choice in Suburban Elections," American Political Science Review. 101 (3):393-408; also see Trounstein, Jessica. "Information, Turnout, and Incumbency in Local Elections." Princeton University. FN 30. <http://www.princeton.edu/csdp/events/Trounstein020509/Trounstein020509.pdf>.