



January 20, 2026

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2452 House Elections Committee

Chairman Proctor and Members of the House Elections Committee:

The Northeast Johnson County Cities of Mission, Merriam, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, and Westwood Hills oppose HB 2452. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2452, which changes the timing of local elections to the fall of even-numbered years and sets requirements for terms of office for locally elected officials. In short, HB 2452 infringes on local control, diminishes voter focus on important local issues, undermines stability and continuity in local government, and, at its core, is an unfunded mandate.

Our citizens are best served when locally elected officials have the freedom to conduct the business of their jurisdictions in manners that best reflect the needs and desires of their constituents. These decisions are first and foremost about the critical everyday matters that keep our cities safe and running smoothly to support a high quality of life for all of our residents: public safety, streets and sidewalks, trees, and parks and recreation. Yet, at the same time, each local government is uniquely equipped to respond to the particular needs and desires of its community. Keeping local elections separate enables our candidates and voters to focus on these important local issues.

We believe HB 2452 challenges the long-standing State election laws which affirm non-partisan requirements for local elections. In the past few years there has been an increasing focus to modify local elections, attempting to make them more partisan and political. For example, when the timing for local elections was changed in 2015 from a spring to fall election cycle, a desire to inject partisanship into local government was part of that effort, though explicitly partisan elections were ultimately rejected by the Legislature, an important decision from our perspective.

House Bill 2452 is the latest effort to transform local elections once again. The shift to elections in even numbered years would appear to be another attempt to tap into the broader partisan and cultural challenges unfolding in America. The division and contention associated with that has no place in local government. Communities in Kansas—our cities are just a few examples—know the local government non-partisan reality, know the partisanship that exists in our nation, and believe the added distraction of bringing partisan politics into our operations is not necessary or wanted.

Our cities support the current laws that protect non-partisanship at the local level. While the current proposed move to even year elections does not overtly impose partisan

political identity, it places local candidates and issues into the environment of partisan politics, based on the timing of state and national elections. Further, many of our municipalities choose to intentionally stagger their local elections in order to prevent significant turnover and preserve stability in city government.

We respectfully request the Committee oppose HB 2452. We appreciate your consideration and we welcome further questions or discussion you may have on this important topic.

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