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Opponent. HB 2452 Changing Local Elections Cycle.
In Person Testimony.   House Elections Committee
Hearing. Tuesday, January 20, 3:30 pm, Room 218-N
Mary Sinclair, PhD —   Kansas PTA, Advocacy Team
(on behalf of Vikki Mullins, Kansas PTA President)

Cheryl Dew, Committee Assistant
785-296-7357 h.Elections@house.ks.gov
Room 149-S, State Capitol Building

Honorable Chair Pat Proctor and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Kansas PTA, thank you for the opportunity to share our significant concerns and opposition to proposed changes to local municipal elections reflected in HB 2452, which is in conflict with Kansas PTA member-driven Legislative Platform, Priority 1.

- **Non-Partisan**. Public education is an essential non-partisan institution and should be supported by state law to remain as such. The proposed change to even-years throws municipal offices into the mix of the statewide and national partisan election cycle.
- **Informed Voters**. Further, this change would make a long ballot even longer and potentially overwhelming to many voters. Kansas PTA supports local efforts to inform voters of their school board candidates and other local officials that impact the lives of Kansas children, which is a significant community undertaking on its own. This proposed change would almost certainly lead to lengthy multi-page ballots, risking voter engagement and voter confidence.
- **Efficiency**. The bill appears to create a mismatch of voting precincts and districts, which could create unnecessary challenges for election officers and restricting options for polling locations. Nor do the proposed transition dates align with the state statute for school board elections, in which newly electeds are seated in January.
- **Voter Turnout**. Kansas has seen an increase in voter turnout since 2015, when all annual elections were moved to November. This bill would have Kansans skipping election years, disrupting this new annual cycle and routine of participating in November elections.

Education is a core service that should be provided to all students regardless of political affiliation. By mixing school board elections into the partisan cycle, it creates the avenue to

undermine the focus on education and shift it towards political ideological interests, rather than the best interests of all students and families.

Partisan elections have become divisive and polarizing, which if spilled over into public education will ultimately harm students and the quality of education. The notion of partisan elections may undermine the credibility of the school board and create the perception of bias. This can ultimately harm the trust that parents, educators, and community members have in the school board and their decisions made.

Our public schools are the heart of Kansas communities, serving 90% of school age youth. Our teachers and administrators are committed to preparing all kids to thrive in work and in life. Creating opportunities for every child to engage and be successful serves to strengthen the viability of a thriving Kansas future.

Non-partisan, odd-year, school board elections allow the focus to remain on education goals and student outcomes rather than political ideology. We urge this committee to oppose HB2425. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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THE PTA POSITION
Kansas PTA is a nonpartisan association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities. PTA mission and purpose have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child's potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.