



CITY OF HAYSVILLE, KANSAS

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January 19, 2026

House Committee on Elections
Hearing: Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 3:30 p.m.
Room 218-N

MAYOR

RUSS KESSLER

CITY COUNCIL

WARD I

DALE THOMPSON
ERIC MYERS

WARD II

JANET PARTON
CARYN CLOTHIER

WARD III

BOB RARDIN
PAT EWERT

WARD IV

JUSTIN BRUSTER
DR. DANNY WALTERS

Re: Testimony in opposition of HB 2452

To Chair Pat Proctor and Members of the Committee:

Kansas has a proud tradition of Home Rule, which empowers local governments to make decisions that best reflect the needs and values of their communities. HB 2452 undermines this principle by imposing state-level restrictions on local election processes. Cities are closest to the people they serve, and they are best positioned to determine how elections should be conducted to ensure accessibility, fairness, and trust.

HB 2452 also undermines the **nonpartisan character** of city and school board elections. Placing these races alongside partisan contests invites national party dynamics, outside money, and polarization into spaces where neighbors have traditionally worked together to solve community problems.

Just as importantly, this bill conflicts with **Kansas constitutional Home Rule**. Article 12, Section 5 grants cities broad authority over local affairs. Election timing has always been a core local function, and cities differ widely in size and needs. A one-size-fits-all mandate from Topeka erodes local autonomy and sets a troubling precedent for future intrusions into municipal governance. Local officials understand the unique challenges their voters face.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject HB 2452 and uphold the principle of Home Rule in Kansas. Local governments should retain the authority to manage their own elections in a way that reflects the needs of their residents. HB 2452 would disrupt established terms of office, create administrative burdens for counties and cities, and introduce confusion for voters. There is no demonstrated problem that this bill solves, and it creates several new ones.

Sincerely,

Russ Kessler
Mayor