



Dr. LeEtta Felter

16 January 2026

House Bill 2451 | Written Testimony – Concerned / Request for Clarification & Amendment

Chairperson and Members of the Kansas House Elections Committee,

My name is Dr. LeEtta Felter, and I submit this testimony regarding HB 2451. At the outset, I want to acknowledge the intent behind this bill. Kansans expect public resources to be used responsibly, and it is reasonable to prevent taxpayer-funded political campaigning. I appreciate efforts to protect public trust. However, I have serious concerns about HB 2451 as drafted because it is unclear what will be defined as “express advocacy” and how this legislation may unintentionally restrict the ability of local officials to provide factual, educational information to the public.

**Local officials must be able to inform and educate**

Local government exists to serve residents, and part of that responsibility is ensuring the public has accurate, timely information—especially when voters are being asked to decide a ballot question or constitutional amendment that may directly impact: public safety, city services and staffing, infrastructure and maintenance, community development, and local budgets and financial obligations.

Residents often look to their city leadership and staff for clarity on what a ballot measure would do, what it would cost, and what the consequences could be if it passes or fails. If “express advocacy” is defined too broadly, local officials may be forced into silence—even when the public is asking for basic explanations.

**The definition must be clear to avoid a chilling effect-** The concern is not just what HB 2451 intends, but how it could be interpreted or enforced. Without a precise and narrow definition, the bill could create a “chilling effect,” where cities avoid sharing even neutral information for fear of violating the law.

For example, would it be considered “express advocacy” for a city to:

- publish a factual explanation of a ballot question and its impact?
- provide a cost estimate or service-level impacts?
- answer resident questions at a public meeting?
- explain what happens if the measure fails?

If the answer is unclear, then the bill is unclear—and local governments will be left guessing.

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