

Senate Federal and State Affairs
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Proponent Testimony for HB 2447
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Dear House Elections Committee,

My name is David Soffer and I am a resident of Overland Park. Many of you know me from my time working for Governor Jeff Colyer and in the Kansas Department of Commerce under Governor Laura Kelly. I am representing every Sabbath-observant Jew residing in Kansas today in standing in support of HB 2447. Currently, caucuses for presidential primaries have been held on Saturdays. This presents a significant challenge to Sabbath-observing Jews. The Sabbath is a day when Jews do not do any activity that would be considered work. This would include anything from using a pen, to driving a car, to using a phone, etc. Voting, unfortunately, would be considered one of those activities. While our community is always a strong proponent of getting out to the polls, and Jewish law strongly emphasizes the importance of voting, we can't violate the Sabbath for voting or for any activity that does not involve lifesaving actions (for instance, our doctors use phones or work on the Sabbath).

HB 2447 would create a primary system and enable absentee ballots for presidential elections. Changing this rule would allow Sabbath-observant Jews to vote for their preferred presidential candidate. This has always been of great importance to our community and would be a welcome change for many of us who value our right to vote. The bill would also allow absentee voting for those unable to vote in person.

We are all people of faith, something this entire committee can appreciate. We are also law-abiding Americans, many of whom are Republicans and Democrats. We all support the change in HB 2447 to move the current system to a primary election, and our community urges this committee to move this bill out favorably for passage with this change.