

Neutral Written Testimony on House Bill 2447

House Committee on Elections

Logan Byrd – Loud Light Civic Action

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Chair Proctor, Members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Logan Byrd, and I serve as Advocacy Manager of Loud Light Civic Action, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports and builds the civic engagement and leadership of young people in Kansas. We represent over 16,000 Kansans, including supporters in every House and Senate district across the state. Loud Light Civic Action's primary goal above all else is to ensure all Kansans can exercise their right to vote in a free and fair election. It is with these values that Loud Light Civic Action testifies to address concerns in part and support in part of HB 2447.

Primary Concern: Adding an Additional Election Administered by Counties without Funding

Currently, the legislature provides no funding to counties for administering elections. Our counties are responsible for the costs of every unfunded mandate required of them by the state legislature, including maintaining the election administration staffing and infrastructure, training and implementing safety and security best practices, and all the materials and locations needed to administer a free and fair election for all eligible Kansas voters.

Support: Standardizing Election Deadlines and Processes

The current 31-day registration deadline for presidential primary elections is out of step with how Kansas voters engage in other elections. Voter interest and participation often increase significantly in the weeks immediately preceding a presidential primary, as campaigns intensify, issues become clearer, and voters pay closer attention. Maintaining an earlier cutoff for registration means many eligible voters, especially young voters, new residents, and those newly motivated to participate, are excluded simply because they missed an arbitrary deadline. This bill would improve this without compromising election integrity.

Support: Standardizing the registration deadline also benefits election administrators.

Having different deadlines for different types of elections creates confusion for voters and additional administrative complexity for county election officials. A consistent 21-day deadline across elections is clearer, easier to communicate, and more efficient to administer. Additionally, by codifying the presidential preference primary and placing its administration with state and county election offices, HB 2447 builds on the success of the 2024 primary and ensures a stable, professional, and well-resourced process going forward. This is a clear improvement over the previous caucus system, which placed significant logistical and financial burdens on political parties and often limited voter access.

Recommendations

While HB 2447 is an important step forward, it should also be viewed as part of a broader conversation about voter access in Kansas. Many states have successfully implemented same-day or near-same-day voter registration, resulting in higher participation and stronger civic engagement without sacrificing security. Shortening the registration deadline moves Kansas closer to these proven best practices and demonstrates that expanding access and maintaining secure elections are not mutually exclusive goals.

We additionally encourage the legislature to begin funding election administration. Considering the considerable interest in addressing property taxes and in maintaining free and fair elections with the best practices in place for both voter turn out and election security, it would be of interest to the legislative body to actually fund the administration that makes these goals possible to achieve.

Conclusion: Loud Light Civic Action is neutral on HB 2493 at this time. While we are encouraged by some parts of this bill, we would like to see concerns with unfunded mandates on counties addressed before we offer our support. We also encourage the committee to engage in the due diligence to ensure that any changes proposed to our electoral laws have been fully vetted with evidence based conclusions for any recommendations. Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.