

Joy Mapes
Private citizen
HB 2448 Opponent
1/29/2026

Chair Proctor and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joy Mapes. I am licensed master social worker, and I have lived in Kansas my entire life. I am a voter in Lawrence, Douglas County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote NO on HB 2448.

As a lifelong Kansan -- before you write me off as a liberal Lawrencian, please know that I grew up in Gardner and Leavenworth, got my BA from Baker University, got my MSW from Washburn University, and also lived in Merriam and Fort Scott -- I am well aware of the concerns repeated almost annually about voter fraud, particularly claims that non-citizens are voting in Kansas and national elections. I am very aware of these claims because they've been the propulsion behind current Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach's less-than-sterling political career. While these claims are Mr. Kobach's political bread and butter, they have been rebutted countless times.

Claims that non-citizens are voting in and "stealing" Kansas and national elections are untrue, debunked, and related to the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory, a racist rallying point that claims non-Americans (really, people who aren't white) are taking over the United States through illegal immigration, voter fraud, and population growth. This unfounded, bigoted fear is the ideology behind HB 2448.

Now that we've discussed the racist lies underpinning this bill, let's look at practical concerns. Previous similar legislation in Kansas, particularly the Kansas Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) Act, cost the state and local governments millions of dollars in implementation costs and legal fees only to be found unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment and the National Voter Registration Act. The SAFE Act was a national and international embarrassment for Kansas, not only because the legislation was impractical and costly, but because it revealed the true intention and effect of the act: to disenfranchise voters.

Voter disenfranchisement occurred because so many Kansans who were legally allowed to vote did not have the resources, understand the complicated new rules, have the time off work, etc. to gather all the citizenship documents newly required for voter registration. The ultimate effect of the SAFE Act was not that non-citizens couldn't vote, but that over 30,000 Kansas who were legally eligible to vote were prevented from registering to vote and exercising their electoral right.

Now we're back to the same song, different verse. Proponents of this bill may say that it will work better this time because it involves driver's licenses. But there's still the same barrier of Kansans needing the information, money, and time to gather citizenship documents before they can get the citizenship status on their license so they can vote. There's still a very probable outcome that many Kansas voters will be disenfranchised, which of course will lead to lawsuits, legal costs, and Kansas in embarrassing news stories.

And this is all without mentioning that having “non-citizen” on their driver's license would make an individual, who could very likely be in the country legally on a visa, vulnerable to discrimination and racist attacks, especially considering the anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from the top of the government.

To summarize, HB 2448 is an attempt to continue a debunked, racist fear that non-citizens are voting, and the real results of allowing this bill to become law would be to disenfranchise voters, cost the state and localities millions of dollars in implementation and legal fees, and make already vulnerable people more vulnerable to anti-immigrant discrimination and violence. There's no win with this bill.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts. I urge you to vote NO on HB 2448.