

# LOUD LIGHT CIVIC ACTION

Melissa Stiehler  
Loud Light Civic Action  
Oral Opponent Testimony of HCR 5021  
For the House Elections Committee

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Chair Proctor, Members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Melissa Stiehler, and I serve as Advocacy Director 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 opposes HCR 5021.

### **Kansas Elections Are Already Secure And The Results Are Verified**

Teams of local election officials process, verify, and count ballots, often in transparent settings. While anti-voter operatives spread lies to sow doubt about an election for their own political gains, the reality is that every investigation into Kansas elections have shown that our state has safe and secure elections that are decided by eligible voters. There has not been any impersonation voter fraud prosecutions in Kansas that we have been able to identify in at least the past twenty years.

### **Kansas Already Has One Of The Strictest Voter ID Laws In The Nation**

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Kansas is one of ten states with the strictest voter ID laws in the country. The purpose of voter ID laws are to verify the identity of the voter to prevent impersonation. Every currently eligible voter ID method accomplishes this goal. This legislation would shift the purpose of voter ID laws from proof of identity to proof of who has the ability to overcome bureaucracy.

### **Further Restrictions On Voter ID Have Not Been Proven To Make Elections More Secure**

The fact is that there are less burdensome ways for voters to prove their identity than the narrowly defined voter ID as written in HCR 5021. This disregard for the injury caused on voters and lack of substantial evidence that there is a state interest that cannot be accomplished by any other means calls to question if this legislation were to even be in compliance with federal law.

### **This Will Be Used To Deny People Their Freedom To Vote**

It has been proven over and over that restricting voter access through deliberate barriers like restrictive voter ID laws cause real harm to the ability for all eligible voters to cast our ballots freely, safely, and equally. This legislation would make it more complicated for eligible Kansans to cast their ballot by restricting what types of photo identification could be used at the polls. This would certainly result in disenfranchising thousands of Kansans who have an eligible ID now— such as a student ID, tribal ID, or an ID from another state— but wouldn't be able to use those to vote in the future.

### **Our Constitution Is A Sacred Document And Changing It Should Only Be Done When Absolutely Necessary And After Thoughtful Consideration**

Without doing any advanced legislative investigation that would lead lawmakers to the conclusion that this amendment is necessary, a proposal to rewrite our constitutional right to vote is being rushed through the legislative process. It hasn't even been given enough significance to merit a single committee meeting being dedicated to this topic. It's dangerous and irresponsible to change our constitution through rushed, sloppy legislating. Kansans deserve to have their lawmakers treat their constitutional rights with respect rather than changing them on political whims. Bill proponents have no real evidence that this would make our elections safer or more secure than couldn't be accomplished through another means. Meanwhile, there is an enormous amount of evidence that restricting voter access through weaponizing bureaucracy, such as restrictive voter ID laws, causes real harm by creating a deliberate barrier to our freedom to vote— one many eligible voters will not have the means to overcome.

**Conclusion: Loud Light Civic Action opposes HCR 5021.** Rewriting our constitutional right to vote based on an ineffective security policy that results in proven barriers to our right to vote isn't something that strengthens our democracy or protects our freedoms. It goes against the values of our nation and our state. Lawmakers should be focusing on proven, effective laws that keep our elections safe while increasing voter access, not restricting it.