



WRITTEN OPPONENT
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony of Marvin Matchett, Norton County Commissioner
Before the House Committee on Elections
House Bill No. 2503
February 3, 2026**

Member Counties

Barber Chairperson Proctor and members of the House Committee on Elections,
Barton
Clark
Ellis Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill No. 2503.
Finney
Ford My name is Marvin Matchett. I serve as a Norton County Commissioner and as Chair of the
Gove Kansas Legislative Policy Group (KLPFG), a nonpartisan, nonprofit association of 33 rural
Graham Kansas counties working collaboratively on issues of mutual concern. KLPFG is one of the oldest
Grant local government associations in Kansas, having been founded nearly 50 years ago.
Gray
Hamilton House Bill No. 2503 repeals the Mail Ballot Election Act and systematically eliminates the
Harper option of conducting mail ballot elections across a wide range of local governmental functions
Haskell in Kansas. This bill is not a technical or administrative update; it is a substantive policy change
Hodgeman that significantly reduces voter access and local flexibility. Its practical effect is to allow
Kearny outcomes to be determined by a smaller and less representative group of voters.
Kiowa
Lane Mail ballot elections have long been used in Kansas for limited, local matters such as bond
Logan issues, annexations, special districts, and other local governance decisions. These elections
Meade frequently occur outside regular election cycles and serve rural residents, elderly voters, voters
Ness with disabilities, and working Kansans who face real barriers to in-person voting. Eliminating
Norton mail ballot elections as a option increases the cost of participation—in terms of time, travel, and
Rice scheduling—and will almost certainly reduce voter turnout.
Rush
Russell This bill also removes decision-making flexibility from local governments and special districts.
Scott Communities across Kansas face different geographic, demographic, and logistical realities. A
Seward one-size-fits-all mandate requiring in-person elections for all purposes risks increasing
Sherman administrative costs, delaying projects, and discouraging civic engagement, particularly in rural
Stanton and geographically dispersed areas.
Stevens
Thomas Additionally, mail ballot elections provide an important measure of resilience during
Trego emergencies, severe weather events, or public health disruptions. By eliminating this tool rather
Wallace than refining or regulating its use, the state limits its ability to ensure continuity of democratic
Wichita participation when traditional voting methods may be difficult or unsafe.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to reject House Bill No. 2503 or, at a
minimum, preserve the option for mail ballot elections where local governments determine they
are appropriate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.