

Oral Testimony Submitted for HB 2453

House Elections Committee

February 3, 2026

Chair Proctor and Members of the Election Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to give proponent testimony for proposed election changes stated in HB 2453. During the 2025 legislative session, I heard from several of my District 88 constituents and others from around Kansas who were concerned about potential decreased voter engagement resulting from the passage of HB 2017 in 2025. HB 2017 requires the return of advance vote ballots by 7:00 p.m. on election day, shortening the number of days to vote by advance ballot from 23 days to 20 days. The new 20-day election cycle changed Kansas' ranking among states, tying with Iowa, with the lowest number of days between when advance vote ballots can be mailed and the last day ballots can be received.

Before I considered proposing election changes in a bill, I contacted some of my constituents and a few Kansas residents I know who work out of state and consistently vote by mail-in advance ballot. I also contacted two election officers who represent counties with a large population and three election officers representing counties with smaller populations for their input on proposed election changes in HB 2453.

HB 2453 proposes 5 election changes as follows:

1. It extends the advance voting period from 20 to 22 days by changing the day for mailing advance voting ballots from Wednesday to Monday three weeks prior to the election (page 6, lines 18-21).
2. Voter registration will end 23 days before the election which is the day before advance voter ballots may be mailed. This is on Sunday three weeks prior to the election allowing for online voter registration on Saturday and Sunday after election offices close on Friday (page 9, lines 17-18 and 22-23).
3. To allow adequate time for the election office to process a request and mail an advance vote ballot and the voter to return the ballot to the election office by mail, applications for an advance vote ballot shall be submitted to the election office by the 14th day prior to an election (page 2, line 41, page 3, line 3, 11-16).

4. Advance voting in person will begin on Tuesday before the election unless an earlier date is designated by the county election officer and will end no later than 12:00 p.m. on Sunday preceding the election. Currently, early in-person voting extends from Tuesday before the election to Friday before the election and on Monday morning before the election until 12:00 p.m. Currently, if the county election officer opts, early in-person voting may occur on Saturday. This bill proposes early in-person voting on the Sunday before the election until 12:00 p.m. if the election officer opts to make it available. There will be no early in-person voting on the Monday before the election to allow election staff to prepare equipment, supplies and ballots for each county polling place and for poll workers to pick up equipment, supplies and ballots before the election office closes on the Monday before the election (page 3, line 26-27). In the more populous counties, it's difficult to prepare for the election day polling places after the Monday noon deadline for early in-person voting. The more populous counties may have 100 or more polling sites to prepare for in a shortened time frame.

5. The deadline for receipt by mail of advance ballots shall be the close of polls on election day rather than the current 7:00 p.m. on election day (page 7, lines 17-18).

Thank you for consideration of the proposed election changes in HB 2453. I'm happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sandy Pickert
District 88 State Representative
Southeast Wichita and Southwest Andover