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February 3, 2026 - Kansas House Elections Committee hearing on HB 2453, adjusting advance-by-mail, voter registration and in-person early voting deadlines – Neutral testimony

Chairman Proctor and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association (KCCEO). The KCCEO is a statewide organization with 109 members, including all county clerks and election commissioners in Kansas. Our members are responsible for administering voter registration and elections at the local level and are committed to ensuring elections that are free, fair, secure, and efficiently administered.

I am submitting this neutral testimony on behalf of the KCCEO membership regarding HB 2453. The intent of this testimony is to provide information from an election administration perspective and to outline general implementation and administrative considerations related to this bill as introduced. We believe that the legislature sets the policy, and we implement it. We follow the laws and regulations to allow the public to participate in free and fair elections. The KCCEO prepared a legislative agenda developed through a policy committee process and approved by a majority of the members. One of the items specifically included is: "Maintain the status quo with regard to election, registration, and canvass schedules...".

We understand the intent to provide more transit time for mailed advance ballots with the removal of the 3-day grace period, but we have concerns about some of the adjusted timelines.

Currently the voter registration deadline falls on a Tuesday (21st day prior) and we begin mailing advance ballots on a Wednesday (20 days prior), both of which are normal workdays for election offices. Many election offices extend their hours on one or more of the last three business days of the voter registration period, as allowed in statute, to accommodate registrant schedules. Moving the registration deadline to the end of day on the Saturday preceding each election could be an issue for individuals wanting to register in-person. While voters can register online or submit forms electronically until 11:59 p.m. on the last day, election offices may be compelled to open on that Saturday. Otherwise, the effective deadline for in-person registration becomes the close of business on Friday, the 25th day preceding the election. Moving the day to begin mailing advance ballots from the 20th day prior to the 22nd day prior should not be an issue, but it is important to keep the registration and mailing deadlines aligned with registration ending prior to mailing. Also, moving the deadline to apply for an advance ballot by mail from 7 days to 14 days is acceptable since 7 days of total transit time, both ways, may not be sufficient given current USPS delivery standards.

We are also concerned about moving the deadline for in-person early voting to 12 p.m. (noon) on the Sunday preceding the election. While many election officials may appreciate the reduced workload on the day prior to each election by changing the deadline for in-person early voting from noon on Monday to noon on Sunday, the day before each election is already very busy with final Election Day preparations and delivery of equipment and supplies to polling places. This change would allow more time to prepare final pollbooks; however, many voters are accustomed to voting on Monday until noon. In my county we regularly have more voters in the 4-hour period on Monday than we have on some of the other 9 days we are open; historically about 10% of our total early in-person voters vote on that Monday. For many counties the effective deadline for early in-person voting would be at the end of the business day on the Friday preceding the election unless they offer voting on the Saturday preceding the election, as allowed in the statute (KSA 25-1122(g)(1)).

The KCCEOA does not take a position for or against HB 2453 at this time. These comments are offered to assist the committee in understanding potential operational and voter-experience considerations associated with the bill. I will gladly stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Piepho". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair