

Kiernan McCarty
kiernanmccarty@gmail.com

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SB 4 Written Only Opponent

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Kiernan and I am a voter in Ellis County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 4.

This bill would effectively eliminate the 3-day grace period that has existed in Kansas for almost a decade. These are valid votes that citizens of the United States cast, and therefore, deserve to be counted. In a proper democracy, people of all walks of life should have their voice represented. I deeply understand the frustrations of having disabilities or being a student in another state that limits the convenience of voting early or in-person. Not even to mention the folks who live in rural and remote areas in Kansas counties, or especially those folks that work every single week day (during which the polls are open) who have a significantly limited time frame to turn in their ballots. These front-lines workers have votes that should count the most, yet the ballot box too often remains inaccessible and inconvenient for them.

Why limit these mail-in votes more? The federal government is responsible for making sure all ballots are post-marked and arrive to the proper destination on time. The only goal this bill would achieve is to punish people for sending mail-in ballots. Advanced and mail voting is a secure and accessible method of casting our votes. I want to ask you all, committee members, do you trust your poll workers and your constituents to maintain a secure and fair system of voting? Election officials' jobs are being undermined with the passage of bills such as SB 4.

This is a bipartisan issue about the strength and inclusion that characterizes Democracy in America. I want to ask members of the committee, do you want valid U.S. citizens votes to be counted in elections? Then I urge you, please do not get rid of the three-day grace period. This period allows real time and effort to be counted on behalf of polls and election workers, as well as our USPS and other transportation and mail workers to get the job done as efficiently as possible. This grace period is logical and helpful to citizens and our democracy, allowing for citizens across Kansas, including those in inconvenient living situations; whether it be elderly folks, rural folks, people with disabilities, people who travel and live away from the state/county they vote in, etc. to have their vote counted as much as those of us that have the convenience of the polls at a walking distance.

Thank you again, members of the committee, for taking the time to read my thoughts and opinions. Once again, I urge you to please vote no of the passage of SB 4.