

Dear Chair Thompson, Vice Chair Blew, Ranking Member Faust-Goudeau, and Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

I write today as the Sedgwick County Election Commissioner in favor of HB 2022 as amended, proposing to limit Special Elections to three specific dates throughout the year. At present, Special Elections may be called by a large variety of municipal units of government, including counties, cities, unified school districts, townships, at most times during the calendar year, with few exceptions. As things stand, no special election may be held within 45 to 60 days of a scheduled primary or general election unless the subject of the special election is placed on the primary or general election ballot, but those remain the only scheduling limitations at law.

Over the last 10 years, special elections held in Sedgwick County have cost approximately \$332,000 in taxpayer funds, exclusive of the cost of wages for County employees in the Elections Office, which may not be recovered by statute. Such elections may be called with limited notice, resulting in staffing issues relating to part-time workers, and problems in logistics in regard to polling location availability.

The proposal here, amending HB 2022, will provide dates certain throughout the year for municipalities to schedule their special and bond election issues, by limiting the same to the first Tuesday in March, and the dates of the primary election in August and general election in November. The proposal allows election officers across the State of Kansas, and in particular counties requiring a larger number of polling locations to deal with these elections, to make the appropriate arrangements in regard to staffing and polling locations to meet the anticipated needs of the electorate.

The anticipated cost-savings to taxpayers, as well as the opportunity to increase turnout for such elections by establishing dates that remain the same each year are self-evident. I have spoken at length about these matters with other Kansas election officials, and there is broad support for these changes.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the amended bill, and ask for your support for passage of it.

Sincerely,

Laura Rainwater, Sedgwick County Election Commissioner