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Written Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Opposition to SB 394, Clarifying the signature verification requirements for advance voting ballot envelopes and providing for the repeal of advance voting statutes, except where advance voting is required by federal law, if a state or federal court issues a final order or judgment which is not subject to appeal invalidating such signature verification requirements.

Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs, Sen. Mike Thompson, Chair - February 2, 2026

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I serve as Executive Director for Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multifaith issue-advocacy organization that "puts faith into action" on a variety of important social and economic justice issues. We work with many of the Mainline denominations in Kansas, including the local judicatories of the ELCA Lutheran Church, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church, and with hundreds of congregations and thousands of people of faith in Kansas. I rise today in opposition to SB 394.

While (as constantly needs to be said) ***there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud***, AG Kobach's hamfisted attempts to 'fight' it continue with this bill. We believe every human being possesses God-given dignity. Central to that dignity is the right to participate in the stewardship of our community through the act of voting. While seemingly benign, this bill contains a "poison pill" provision that threatens to disenfranchise Kansans en masse by effectively dismantling our state's advance voting system.

Our faith calls us to look out for the "least of these." This includes ensuring that seniors, disabled folks, rural farmers, hardworking parents – all of us – have a seat at the table. Voting by mail is a critical way we achieve that in Kansas. For those with physical limitations, getting to a polling location is an undue burden. For voters who live miles away from their nearest polling location, relying on the postal service to make their voices heard is often the only feasible option. And of course, for the working class, citizens balancing one, two, three, or more jobs cannot afford to wait in long lines during traditional business hours or take off work.

The most alarming aspect of this bill is the provision that triggers a total repeal of advance voting statutes if a court finds Kansas' current signature verification methods unconstitutional. These "poison pill" type provisions are wrong. If a court determines that a specific verification process is flawed or discriminatory, the remedy should be to fix the process, not to punish law-abiding voters by nixing the entire system. This provision creates an unstable legal environment where Kansans' fundamental rights can vanish overnight due to a single court ruling.

Our faith calls us to build a 'Beloved Community' where every voice is heard. KIFA's position has always been that we should make voting as easy as possible for everyone who is eligible to vote. We are concerned that this bill is more about protecting political power than protecting the ballot. Election security comes from high participation and a clear, transparent process, not arbitrary hurdles. Making voting more complicated and challenging for eligible citizens does not make an election safer. It only makes it less representative.

We ask you to protect the sacredness of the vote by ensuring that voting remains open, accessible, and supported for all those who are eligible to vote – including those who vote advanced by mail. We ask you to please vote NO on SB 394. Thank you.