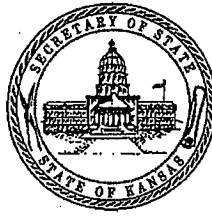


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STATE OF KANSAS

House Committee on Elections

Testimony on House Bill 2780
Ryan Kriegshauser, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State,
Office of Legal Counsel and Policy

March 14, 2012

~~Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:~~

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2780. This bill would establish a procedure for the development of ballot language statements on local question submitted elections.

In cases where an election is brought about by a petition, the county election officer would determine if the ballot question needs clarification and, if so, would request the county, district attorney or county counselor to prepare a ballot language statement. The statement would be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

In cases where an election is brought about by means other than a petition, such as by action taken by a local governing body, the county election officer would request the Secretary of State to prepare a ballot language statement. A possible amendment may be presented to submit such a ballot language statement to the Attorney General's Office for review. We would support such an amendment.

The Secretary of State's office supports efforts to reduce voter confusion. There have been situations in recent years where voters were confused by a ballot question, but there was no provision in law for clarifying statements to be added to the ballot. When constitutional amendments are voted on at statewide elections, there are explanatory statements to help voters understand the question on which they are voting. It makes sense to have similar statements available for local question submitted elections.

~~Our office will be able to implement the provisions of House Bill 2780 with existing resources.~~

~~We support House Bill 2780 in its attempt to clarify ballot questions and reduce voter confusion.~~
Thank you for your consideration.

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