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SB 455 - Opponent
Written-Only Testimony
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Good morning to all and thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today.

My name is Donnavan Dillon. I was born and raised in Kansas, living in Lawrence for most of my life. I am currently a freshman at the University of Kansas pursuing a major in political science and sociology. Outside of school, I play the violin, work two jobs, and participate in club and community events at every opportunity. Because of this, I am a fairly busy person making staying engaged politically engaged relatively difficult, and I am not an anomaly.

For college students managing a full course load, studying, jobs, clubs, and social life mean we are busy from morning till night. This makes vote-by-mail and dropboxes the best means of voting for students not only in Kansas but across the country. It gives students a larger window to vote, allows both in-state and out-of-state students to fulfill their civic duties, and is more accessible to those with busy lifestyles to participate in the democratic process.

The 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reported that in 2020 for the University of Kansas, 17,125 students voted, a little under 5,000 more than in 2016. This report also found that in 2020 11,327 students voted (early/not in person) almost 10,000 more students than in 2016. This trend was not only seen on college campuses but across the entire United States, making voting by mail and drop boxes vital to our voting infrastructure. Mail-in voting is used by working adults, busy students, and the elderly who can't easily make it to polling locations. Vote by mail and drop boxes were also responsible for keeping thousands of Kansas safe while exercising their civic duty these past elections.

By requiring the use of the United States postal service when returning an advance ballot by mail, which would essentially ban drop boxes, SB 455 goes directly against voting trends, data, and, most importantly, the American people.

In 2020 we saw the USPS's shortcomings in handling such high ballot numbers. Centralizing the entire mail-in system under the USPS could have even more harm in future elections. Kansans deserve the right to cast their ballot safely without unnecessary state government interference. The legislature should focus on passing pro-voter laws that empower our local election officials to respond to the needs of voters in our communities- not restricting voting methods that we've safely used for decades.

This is why I urge you to vote down SB 455. Stand with the working-class families who fuel Kansas's economy, students who represent Kansas's future, and the elderly who have made Kansas the great state that it is today by protecting our voting rights and access to mail-in voting and drop boxes.

