

Donnavan Dillon  
Private Testimony  
Opponent Testimony of HB 2056  
For the House Elections Committee

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 sophomore at the University of Kansas pursuing a political science and sociology major. I am also a youth organizer in politics and a fierce advocate for accessible voting, which is why I am here today to urge you to vote in opposition to HB 2056.

Now I'm not going to sit here and tell you every statistic around why a grace period is integral to a functioning vote-by-mail system- which the last few years have shown us is one of the most accessible forms of voting across age groups and demographics. During the COVID pandemic, mail-in ballots made voting one of the least affected infrastructures the pandemic impacted. This bill would be detrimental to access and participation with our great state's elections.

A personal example of how this bill will negatively impact the people you are here to serve is my grandparents, Linda and Louis Tolbert. During the summer of 2020, I spent the entire summer living with my grandparents, helping out around the house with various day-to-day chores and activities. Being immunocompromised like many elderly, they were homebound. I was responsible for fetching their groceries and anything that needed to be done for the general public. As someone heavily involved in politics and campaign work, I shifted my workspace to their dining room table. From June through the election, I phone banked for hours, reminding folks across our state to request ballots, vote, and send their mail-in ballots. These conversations went past working hours with me reminding my grandparents to fill out and return their ballots. My grandparents are very habitual people, like many, especially regarding voting. Despite my constant reminders and constant talk of voting and ballots echoing from their dining room, my grandparents did not fill out their ballots and put them in their mailbox until the morning of Election Day. Their votes were counted.

This story is not an anomaly but a common occurrence not only people of our state but the people of our country can relate to. No matter how many mailers, texts, and phone calls we receive, every election cycle, a good portion of voters wait to vote until election day for whatever reason that may be. If this bill were to go into effect, it would not allow for tens of thousands of valid ballots not to be counted. This is especially true in the cases of the elderly, disabled, veterans, and those in rural areas. Because of this, I urge you to oppose HB 2056 and any other legislation to make voting less accessible for every Kansan.