

January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023

Caleb Smith  
Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice  
House Committee on Elections

Members of the Elections Committee,

My name is Caleb Smith; I am a Campaign Director for Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

**Kansas Appleseed opposes HB 2057.**

The research is clear: when more people vote, communities thrive. Higher voter turnout results in more resources, better physical and mental health, more access to comprehensive health care, more secure housing, more nutritious food, better quality education, more jobs with livable wages, less crime, and lower measures of discrimination.<sup>1 2</sup>

Advance ballots make it easier for more people to exercise their right to vote. They help address the effects of potential Election Day obstacles like bad weather, long lines at polling places, or the inability to take time off from work. The use of secure ballot drop boxes is demonstrated to improve voter turnout - one recent study showed they can increase turnout by as much as 7%.<sup>3</sup>

This bill attempts to make it so that all drop boxes have to be closed after regular business hours and be “continuously observed by an employee of the county election office or be continuously monitored by video recording equipment” and requires these recordings to be maintained as a public record for one year. Not only is this a huge burden to taxpayers, but this is also a huge burden on already overworked election workers who oftentimes simply do not have the resources to effectively implement this bill’s requirements.

Against the stated policy of this bill, forcing counties to use their election office employees in this way would prevent them from doing other tasks to monitor and administer elections which

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<sup>1</sup> Yagoda, N. “Addressing Health Disparities Through Voter Engagement.” *Annals of Family Medicine*. 2019. <https://www.annfammed.org/content/17/5/459.long>

<sup>2</sup> Abramovita, M. et.al. “Voting Is Social Work.” *Journal of Social Work Education* (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1656690>

<sup>3</sup> Collingwood, L., et. al. “Do Drop Boxes Improve Voter Turnout?” *Election Law Journal* (2018). <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/elj.2017.0450>

would likely be far more beneficial for ensuring the security and accuracy of elections. There is not a single documented incident of voter fraud using ballot drop boxes in Kansas according to the Heritage Foundation and only about a dozen unsubstantiated voter fraud complaints total according to state voting officials<sup>45</sup> Access to ballot drop boxes improves voter turnout and allows for safer voting. This bill would simply make it harder for people to vote and could potentially compromise election integrity by unnecessarily diverting election office resources.

For all these reasons, Kansas Appleseed opposes HB 2057.

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<sup>4</sup> The Heritage Foundation. "Election Fraud Cases." [Voter Fraud Map: Election Fraud Database | The Heritage Foundation](#)

<sup>5</sup>Mcmaster, Jessica."Kansas Secretary of State responds to JoCo Sheriff's allegations." KSHB, July 29, 2022.

<https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/investigations/kansas-secretary-of-state-responds-to-joco-sheriffs-claims-around-election-fraud-allegations>