

January 30, 2023

House Committee on Elections

Representative Pat Proctor, Chair
Representative Paul Waggoner, Vice Chair
Representative Brandon Woodard, Ranking Minority
Representative Emil Bergquist
Representative Kenneth Collins
Representative Michael Dodson
Representative Robyn R. Essex
Representative Allison Hougland
Representative Leah Howell
Representative Cyndi Howerton
Representative Cindy Neighbor
Representative Melissa Oropeza
Representative Jeff Underhill

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

I am writing with concerns regarding HB2057. I am not an election expert, but I have been a voter for more than 50 years and I have worked a number of elections for the Shawnee County Election Office. My experience is that elections in Kansas are well run and fair. More importantly, the Kansas Secretary of State and municipal audits and recounts that have taken place in every county bear this out. Advanced voting in Kansas is safe, secure, popular and has been used here for decades. 41% of Kansans voted by advanced ballot in the 2022 election and every county safely utilized advanced ballot drop off options. These are encouraging numbers, but restricting advanced voting, as I fear this bill would do, could seriously impede the ability of citizens to vote.

Secretary of State Scott Schwab has repeatedly supported the use of advanced ballot drop boxes as a secure means to return ballots and Attorney General Kris Kobach has supported the 3 day grace period for a vote cast on or before election day to ensure citizens with slower mail delivery, such as rural voters, get their vote counted.

I believe the provisions of HB2057 offer answers to a problem that doesn't exist. This bill requires either staff monitor, or video recording of voters faces be made. Such solutions would be expensive for counties and a waste of tax dollars and likely create a violation of voter privacy rights.

Kansans deserve the right to cast their ballot safely without unnecessary state government interference. Legislation should focus on passing pro-voter laws that empower our local election officials to respond to the needs of voters in our communities rather than restricting voting methods that we have used for decades. Democracy is stronger when we make it possible for the greatest number to participate.

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