

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

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FEBRUARY 1, 2024

WRITTEN TESTIMONY REGARDING H.B. 2559

Chairman Proctor and members of the committee, my name is Sean Hatfield. I am a district judge in the Eighteenth Judicial District (Sedgwick County) and a member of the Kansas District Court Judges Association executive committee (KDJA).

The new reality of AI technology increasingly reaches many areas of our social and civic lives. It presents unique challenges to all branches of government, including the judiciary. H.B. 2559 recognizes this and addresses the growing concern of false representations that AI poses to candidates for election and appointed state officials.

The selection of judges and the method of determining their continued term of service varies. While some trial level judges achieve their position through partisan and non-partisan elections, others go through a nomination process and subsequently stand for retention. At the appellate level all Kansas Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Court justices stand for retention.

As proposed, H.B. 2559 addresses the use of “synthetic media in any election campaign communication through any medium to alter the appearance, action or speech of a candidate” or an “elected or appointed state official.” Kan. H. 2559, 2024 Sess., § (2)(A) and (B) (Jan. 22, 2024) (as introduced).

KDJA would encourage this body to also include language that clearly contemplates covering both election and retention campaigns and retention state officials.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of KDJA,

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