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## STATE OF KANSAS

February 7, 2024

### **Testimony on HB2572 (In Person / Opponent)**

House Committee on Elections

Tuesday, February 8, 2024

Chairman Proctor and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2572

The Secretary of State respectfully opposes HB 2572 which mandates that anyone who carries a ballot envelope must take it to the county election office, be photographed with each ballot envelope, provide photo ID, and have their personal information recorded. This would mean, for instance, that a person could no longer take a spouse's mail ballot envelope and place it in their curbside mailbox for postal pickup. Instead, for example, the person would need to drive to the county election office, hand deliver the ballot, have their picture taken, and provide personal identification. Then drive home.

This is a remarkable burden to place on voters and on county election staff, for no apparent benefit or increase in election security.

Moreover, because there was no open records exemption these photographs and some, or all, of the personal information would be public record, making anyone who carried a ballot vulnerable to the type of harassment that has bedeviled other states.

Since the inception of no-excuse advance by mail voting in 1996, there has been no record of a mail ballot returned that was not requested by a properly registered Kansas voter. There has been no evidence presented that so called "ballot harvesting" has posed a problem in previous Kansas elections. Unlike many states that mail ballots to every voter, Kansas only mails a ballot if requested by a verified voter.

"Ballot harvesting" is a concept with no defined meaning. It focuses, not on the validity of the ballot itself, but on a method of transmitting a ballot to election staff, specifically having someone else carry the ballot envelope for the vote. In theory, that applies to one person carrying a single ballot a short distance or an old-school party boss collecting 1,000 ballots in a basket.

In 2021, the legislature defined one person carrying more than 10 mail ballots in any election as a crime. While that prohibition is difficult to directly enforce, the organizations that may benefit from having a person carry more than 10 ballots in an election – campaigns, political parties, PACs, 501(c)(4)s, etc -- have given stringent directives to avoid a statutory violation.

We do not perceive how this burdensome government mandate would provide any benefit.

*/Clayton Barker*

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