

Opponent Oral Testimony on Senate Bill 210
Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Davis Hammet – Loud Light Civic Action
February 14, 2023

Chair Thompson, Members of the Committee,

Preemption – Subverting Local Control

This bill directly strips away local control for communities to determine if partisan or nonpartisan elections are the best choice for their community.

Reduced Candidate Pool – Hatch Act & Making All Elections Partisan

This bill appears to turn every election for every office in Kansas into a partisan election. This would then activate the Hatch Act's prohibition on federal employees running in partisan races. This severely reduces the number of Kansans that may be eligible to run for, and ultimately work for, their neighbors.

Enhanced Polarization – Divert Focus from Local Issues to National Narratives

Many issues dealt with in local government are inherently local issues. Turning these elections partisan enhances the appeal of relying on big controversial national political narratives instead of local expertise and problem solving. Polarization increasingly creates division in our communities and this bill enhances that polarization instead of seeking to reduce it.

Technical Questions

Is there a deadline for candidates to elect to add a political party designation? Can a candidate that wins in August change or opt into a different political designation for November?

I recommend this committee oppose SB210. I'm happy to stand for any questions when appropriate.