



February 13, 2023

Sent via email only to Sheila.Wodtke@senate.ks.gov

Senate Bill No. 210: Testimony in Opposition

Conferee: David E. Waters, Mayor of Westwood, KS

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Governing Body of the City of Westwood, Kansas, I wish to advise the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs of the City's opposition to Senate Bill No. 210. Under this bill, K.S.A. 25-613 would be amended such that a candidate for local office may, at his or her option, "elect to have such candidate's political party or political designation added to such candidate's name." The City and the members of the Governing Body feel strongly that local government works best as a non-partisan service to our constituents, and that attempts to introduce partisan politics of the kind currently found in Topeka and Washington, D.C., would be detrimental to our residents and our communities.

This bill would also appear to directly conflict with K.S.A. 25-2113, which provides (in relevant part), "City elections shall be nonpartisan or partisan as determined by the governing body ...". Indeed, in 2017 the City of Westwood adopted Ordinance No. 978 (creating new Code Sec. 6-107), establishing, "The election of all city officials appointed by election, including the office of the Mayor and all Council offices, shall be conducted in a nonpartisan manner." At best, Senate Bill No. 210 is poorly-written and may be too-cute-by-half in not addressing K.S.A. 25-2113, purporting to allow cities to determine their own local affairs and hold nonpartisan elections, while at the same time allowing individuals to ignore those determinations. This creates confusion and an adversarial relationship between cities and candidates for office.

We strongly urge the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs, as well as the entire Kansas Legislature, to reject Senate Bill No. 210. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David E. Waters, Mayor
City of Westwood, Kansas
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cc: Leslie Herring, City Administrator, Westwood, KS (via email to leslie.herring@westwoodks.org)
John Goodyear, General Counsel, League of Kansas Municipalities (via email to jgoodyear@lkm.org)