

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mark Kahrs at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, February 04, 2015, 281-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Randy Powell – Excused

Representative Tom Sawyer – Excused

Representative Pam Curtis, appointed substitute member to the committee

Committee staff present:

Cindy Lash, Legislative Research Department

Martha Dorsey, Legislative Research Department

June Christensen, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Daniel Yoza, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Mike Heim, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Carol Williams, Executive Director, Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission

Brian Newby, Johnson County Election Commissioner

Mark Tallman, Executive Director/Advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards

Diane Gjerstad, Advocate, Wichita Public Schools, USD259

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Possible bill introductions**

Representative Kahrs called the meeting to order and recognized Representative Carmichael, who introduced a bill regarding elections; ballots on election day at polling places; universal voting centers with ballots on demand; and delivery of ballots. There were no objections.

### **Approval of January 21, 26, and 28, 2015 Minutes**

Chairman Kahrs noted that the January 21, 26, and 28, 2015, Minutes were being presented and asked if there were corrections or additions. *Representative Campbell moved that the Minutes be approved as presented; seconded by Representative Whitmer.*

Representative Carmichael said he would like to clarify his concern regarding the hyperlinks for minutes testimony and if the link listed would go to the proper testimony, since that cannot be accessed prior to approval of the minutes.

*Representative Campbell moved the motion, which carried.*

### **Hearing on: HB2183 — Political campaigns and use of technology.**

Chairman Kahrs introduced Daniel Yoza, revisor, who reviewed **HB2183**. The bill would not allow any registered lobbyist, political committee, or person, other than an individual, to contribute to a legislator,

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candidates, or elected state officers during the legislative session. It also addresses the use of social media restrictions and use of wifi in the Statehouse.

Chairman Kahrs introduced Carol Williams, executive director of the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, who presented testimony as a proponent of the bill. ([Attachment 1](#)). She reviewed each of the three proposed changes: prohibition of soliciting contributions during the session; clarification of social media postings; and the Kansas statehouse wifi network. She answered and explained several questions.

There were no neutral or opponent conferees. Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2183**.

**Hearing on: HB2184 — Governmental ethics; limitations on gifts and travel; lobbyist filings.**

Daniel Yoza, revisor, reviewed **HB2184**. This bill would address acceptance of recreation or hospitality gifts.

Carol Williams stood for questions. She said the present amount of \$40 for hospitality had not been changed since 2000. After discussion, it was suggested that the proposed \$80 amount be amended to \$100 to be in line with the \$100 recreation amount. The revisor will make the necessary changes.

There were no neutral or opponent conferees. Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2184**.

**Hearing on: HB2185 Elections; polling places; unified school districts.**

Daniel Yoza, revisor, reviewed **HB2185**. The bill would direct schools to allow the use of its buildings for polling places. It would also direct that teachers have an in-service training day on election day.

Chairman Kahrs introduced Brian Newby, Johnson County election commissioner, as a proponent of the bill. Mr. Newby said that 102 polling places were held in schools during the 2004 presidential election, and only four were used during the November 2014 election. He said he believed it to be a result of the Sandy Hook shootings in 2013 and school security issues. His office is having a difficult time finding places that meet the needs for elections, and there could be excessive costs, as much as \$25,000, to lease private space. ([Attachment 2](#)).

Committee members discussed the issue. It was suggested that teacher in-service days might be scheduled on election days when students would not be present. If proposed legislation to move spring elections goes through, there would be fewer election days, which would also be beneficial. Mr. Newby noted that combining sites and central locations could cause long waiting lines near the close of election deadlines.

Chairman Kahrs introduced Mark Tallman, executive director/advocacy, Kansas Association of School Boards. He explained that KASB's opposition to the proposed bill included issues, such as local control by boards of education, school security and other educational and extracurricular activities on election

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day. ([Attachment 3](#)). There was additional discussion regarding having stable election sites so voters did not have to go to different sites each election, combining election sites, and advance voting sites.

Diane Gjerstad, Wichita USD 259 advocate, also spoke in opposition to the bill. ([Attachment 4](#)). The district has not had elections in its school buildings for several years. She said even on teacher in-service days, there are considerable numbers of people in the buildings.. Calendars with those days are finalized several months ahead of the school year and are generally held on Mondays and Fridays, which may not coincide with the election days.

### **Announcements**

Chairman Kahrs announced that the next meeting will be on Monday, February 9, at 1:30 pm.

Monday's meeting will be hearings on **HB2182**; **HB2211**; **HB2212**; and **HB2214**. If time permits, bills heard today will be worked.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Kahrs adjourned the meeting at 3 pm.