

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mark Kahrs at 1:30 pm on Monday, February 16, 2015, 281-N of the Capitol.

All members were present

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

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

No conferees present

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

### **Hearing continuation on: HB2212- City political committees.**

Chairman Kahrs reopened the hearing on **HB2212**. This bill would allow the creation of city political committees in addition to county and state committees. ([Attachment 1](#)). He introduced Joan Wagnon, chair of the Kansas Democratic Party, who said the party is in opposition of this bill. The Party *Bylaws* do not provide for allowing this, and they believe it will weaken the current system rather than strengthen it. They have had no requests for city parties, and many of their counties have clubs that meet to discuss topics and enjoy fellowship.

Representative Whitmer indicated that if the bill passes, it could be helpful to other parties. There were no other questions.

Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2212**.

### **Hearing continuation on: HB2214- Procedure of appointment when certain vacancies of office or nomination occur.**

Ms. Wagnon presented testimony on **HB2214**, and said the party does not object to the bill and believes it would clear up some confusion. ([Attachment 2](#)). She suggested an additional amendment to Statute 25-3002(a) (1), which would allow the state committee to call the district convention if a vacancy occurs in a county where there is no organized party. If a county official should die in that county, there would be no other way to call a meeting. She said if a revision is considered, the committee and revisor could determine the proper language. She also said this had happened in an unorganized county recently, and it had to be remedied through the secretary of state's office.

Upon questioning, she said the party does like to set its own rules as provided for in another section of the bill.

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Representative Sawyer requested that an amendment be prepared to accomplish her suggestion.

Chairman Kahrs requested Clay Barker, chairman of the Republican Party, for his opinion regarding the bill. Mr. Barker said he would support this through whatever means decided. Chairman Kahrs requested a draft amendment to be prepared and allow some of the committee members to view it before the bill is worked.

Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2214**.

**Hearing on: HB2213 — Campaign finance; increasing contribution limits; contributions received during primary period.**

Chairman Kahrs introduced Daniel Yoza to review what the proposed bill would accomplish. He said there would be two changes - the time frame for receiving donations for primary/general elections and increasing the amounts that could be contributed.

The committee discussed the bill and if contributions designated for the general election could be spent before. There will be a balloon amendment to address this. Carol Williams, executive director of the Governmental Ethics Commission, further explained the proposed change.

Clay Barker, chairman of the Kansas Republican Party, testified in support of the bill and said it supported the increase in contributions, as costs have increased over the years. ([Attachment 3](#)). They also have to be in competition with outside groups and PACs (Political Action Committees). He said getting the general funds during the primary period could be beneficial in being ready to campaign immediately after the primary but that the accounting procedures to track the funds could be burdensome.

Mr. Barker stood for questions and said he believed it would be beneficial for the candidates to have a level playing field with those from outside groups.

Joan Wagon testified, noting support of the portion of the bill to increase donations but that the party would not be in favor of the receipt of general funds before the primary. She said if it was approved that the portion where the money spent in an unsuccessful campaign would have to be spent. ([Attachment 4](#)).

Written testimony as a proponent, was received from Kelly Arnold. ([Attachment 5](#)).

There was no further opponent or neutral testimony presented.

Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2213**.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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### **Hearing on: HB2215 — Campaign finance; transfer of campaign funds.**

Chairman Kahrs opened the hearing on **HB2215**. Mr. Yoza reviewed the bill that would allow a candidate to transfer unexpended campaign funds to a bona fide successor. He clarified other sections of the bill.

Committee members had several questions regarding the ability to transfer funds between potential candidates for other offices and different scenarios that might occur.

Joan Wagon presented testimony in opposition to the proposed bill. ([Attachment 6](#)). She said the playing field should be leveled, and a candidate who had considerable funds by benefit of this bill would have an advantage over a candidate who has no funds. It would be detrimental to both parties, and those candidates who have considerable funds are more likely to win. She said she believes the current law is fair to all parties.

Ms. Wagon answered several questions.

Carol Williams presented written neutral testimony regarding the proposed bill. ([Attachment 7](#)).

Representative Campbell said he was not in favor of the bill and said if it is done, contributors need to have the ability to have donations returned.

Chairman Kahrs closed the hearing on **HB2215**.

Carol Williams also distributed a copy of materials requested by the committee. ([Attachment 8](#)).

### **Announcements**

Chairman Kahrs announced that the next meeting will be held Wednesday, February 18, 2015. Action will be taken on the four bills heard today.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.