

HODGEMAN COUNTY CLERK

PO BOX 247

JETMORE, KS 67854-0247

COUNTY CLERK

SARAH RAINS

PO Box 247

500 Main St

Jetmore, KS 67854



(620) 357-6421
(620) 357-6313(f)

March 9, 2015

Honorable Kansas State Representative Mark Kahrs
Chairman, House Committee on Elections
and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Re: SB 171; Recent Amendment(s)

Chairman Kahrs and Distinguished Committee Members,

I am writing to you today to provide testimony and information as a county clerk, election official, and taxpayer in opposition of the recent amendment to SB 171 which would move local elections to the fall of even years.

This past December I provided testimony to the Committee in regard to combining city/school & even year elections. In general, my greatest concern is the complexity of additional ballot styles (regardless of partisan or nonpartisan) and the associated cost. For Hodgeman County, we have a very high cost per voter if you look at the comparative breakdown that was compiled in Committee. The majority of this cost is driven by ballot programming. When a ballot is programmed for an election here, there are actually 2 ballot charges per single ballot style: one charge for our paper ballots and one charge for the same ballot to be programmed electronically (required for ADA compliance). The more ballot styles, the higher the cost which is why HG County has one of the highest costs per voter out of all of the testimony provided in Committee. This is not just a concern for a small southwest county, but is a growing concern across the state as everyone begins to fully understand the financial & administering implications of combining these two important elections.

Over the past month I have been reaching out to other counties statewide seeking information on how many counties are in similar situation of outsourcing their programming. For many of these counties, combining elections would drastically increase their ballot styles thus increasing the overall cost of administering an election. Over half of the state replied to the inquiry and here is what I have found: at least 42 of the 105 counties currently utilize an outside company for programming.

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For these 42 counties, they can expect a higher cost each and every election if these elections are combined unless their school districts & special districts follow their existing precinct lines. For the additional 14 counties that are able to program/partially program, cost is still a pertinent concern. Programming takes time and people which quickly adds up if you take into account wages, benefits, and equipment needed. It is important for legislation to see that this change could fiscally impact a majority of the state.

In closing I think we all agree that voter turn out for Spring Elections is a concern. If the overall intent of combining elections is to improve voter turnout, I am concerned as the saying goes, "does the end justify the means"? I can not speak for all of the Kansas County Clerks & Election Officials, but I believe we are all more than willing to pool our knowledge and resources to help make elections more successful! Whether it is through mail ballot elections or even looking into secure internet voting, surely we can come up with a viable solution for both now and in the future.

My sincerest thank you for allowing the voice of a rural, southwest Kansas county to be heard. We truly appreciate the opportunity!

Sincerely,



Sarah Rains

Hodgeman County Clerk | Election Officer | PIO | FIO

Breakdown of Ballot Programming by County



"In House" Programming

County programs their own ballots



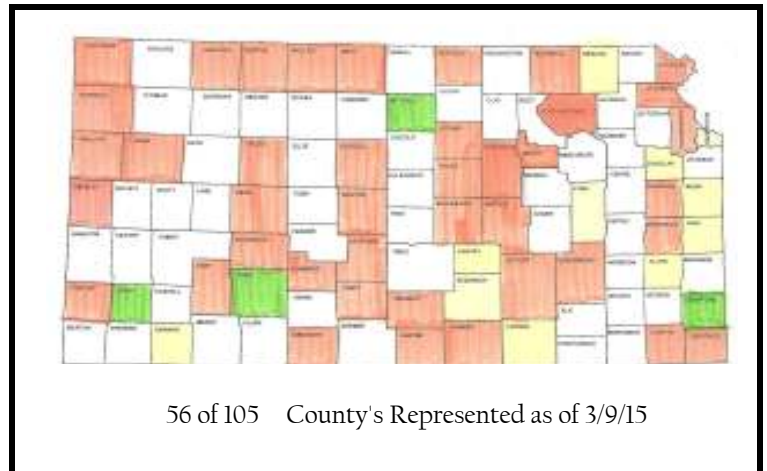
"Out Sourced" Programming

County pays a 3rd party agency for ballot programming



Partial Programming

County does a combination of "In House" & "Outsourced" Programming



"In House" Programming

Nemaha	Linn
Miami	Harvey
Sedgwick	Lyon

Cowley
Seward

Allen
Douglas

Partial Programming

Crawford	Mitchell
Ford	Grant

"Outsourced" Programming

Anderson	Ellis
Atchison	Franklin
Barton	Geary
Butler	Gray
Comanche	Greeley
Cherokee	Greenwood
Cheyenne	Harper
Decatur	Hodgeman
Dickinson	Kingman
Doniphan	Labette
Edwards	Leavenworth

Logan
Marion
Marshall
McPherson
Ness
Norton
Ottawa
Phillips
Pottawatomie
Pratt
Republic

Russell
Saline
Sherman
Smith
Stafford
Stanton
Sumner
Trego
Wallace

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