

MINUTES OF THE SENATE ETHICS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mitch Holmes at 9:30am on Thursday, February 12, 2015, 159-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Kay Wolf – Excused

Committee staff present:

Jill Shelley, Legislative Research Department

Martha Dorsey, Legislative Research Department

Darla Conner, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant

Daniel Yoza, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Mike Heim, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Pete Meitzner, Wichita City Councilman on behalf of Dale Goter, Wichita Government Relations

Senator Marci Francisco

Mike Koss, Legal Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities

Jamie Shew, Douglas County Clerk

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

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Hearing continuation on: SB171 — Elections; municipalities and special districts; spring to fall; other changes.

Chairman Holmes continued the hearing on **SB171**.

Pete Meitzner, Wichita City Councilman, on behalf of Dale Goter, Wichita Government Relations Manager, testified before the committee via teleconference in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 1](#)) He stated the City of Wichita opposes the effort to mandate the timing and partisanship of local elections. Councilman Meitzner stood for questions.

Senator Marci Francisco gave testimony before the committee in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 2](#)) She expressed her concerns with the proposed changes and shared her personal experience of election to the Lawrence City Commission. Senator Francisco stood for questions.

Mike Koss, Legal Counsel for the League of Kansas Municipalities, appeared before the committee in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 3](#)) The league opposes this bill because it would diminish the ability of citizens to focus on local issues and take away local control of elections. Mr. Koss stood for questions.

Jamie Shew, Douglas County Clerk, gave testimony before the committee in opposition of **SB171** on behalf of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association. ([Attachment 4](#)) The association opposes **SB171** in its current format. Some concepts embodied in the bill would be helpful but there are

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concerns regarding increased ballot styles, multi-page ballots and increased complexity especially in August even-year elections. Mr. Shew addressed questions from the committee.

Mark Tallman, Associate Executive Director/Advocacy of the Kansas Association of School Boards appeared before the committee in opposition of **SB171**. ([Attachment 5](#)) The association opposes changing local school board elections and requiring school districts to make school buildings available for polling places. Mr. Tallman stood for questions.

Kiel Mangus, Manhattan Assistant City Manager, submitted written testimony in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 6](#))

Aaron Estabrook, Board Member of USD 383 Manhattan-Ogden, submitted written testimony in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 7](#))

Jeff Chubb, Board Member USD 446 Independence, submitted written testimony in opposition to **SB171**. ([Attachment 8](#))

Chris Brown, Kansans for Liberty, submitted written testimony in support of **SB171**. ([Attachment 9](#))

Craig Gabel, Kansans for Liberty and past City Council Candidate, submitted written testimony in support of **SB171**. ([Attachment 10](#))

There being no further conferees the hearing on **SB171** was closed.

Chairman Holmes had two articles for the committee to read and consider. An article by Sarah Anzia addresses the off-cycle local elections of Ferguson, Missouri and how it effects voter turnout.

([Attachment 11](#)) And an article that deals with fund raising efforts of school board members. ([Attachment 12](#))

The next meeting will be February 18, 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.