

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

The meeting was called to order by Representative Richard L. Harper at  
Chairperson

9:00 a.m. a.m./p.m. on February 17, 1983 in room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Guldner, excused; Representative Baker, excused; Representative Moomaw, excused.

Committee staff present: Ramon Powers, Legislative Research Department  
Arden Ensley, Revisor of Statute's Office  
Eric Rucker, Secretary of State's Office  
Dottie Musselman, Committee Secretary

## Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Wunsch, District 101, Kingman, Kansas  
Doug Gaumer, Student Governor of the YMCA Model  
Legislature for Kansas, Kingman, Kansas  
Patty James, Douglas County Clerk, Lawrence, Kansas  
Bill Blankenship, Associated Students of Kansas,  
Topeka, Kansas  
Matt McKinney, Associated Executive Director,  
United School Administration, Topeka, Kansas  
Mary Hope, Election Commissioner, Shawnee County,  
Topeka, Kansas  
Representative Moore, District 26, Olathe, Kansas  
Lee Alt, Election Commissioner, Johnson County, Kansas

Chairperson Harper called the meeting to order.

A substitute motion was made by Representative Fox, that the Committee pass-over HB 2050 until amendments can be drafted. Seconded by Representative Acheson. Motion carried.

At this time, HB 2205, An Act relating to elections; concerning the appointment of deputy county election officers at high schools, was brought to the floor for hearing. Representative Blumenthal, who is the prime sponsor of this bill, was now recognized by Chairperson Harper, and he explained the text of this bill.

Chairperson Harper called upon Representative Justice, who stated that the United States of America, being one of the free countries of the world, as far as politics, has the poorest voting records in the world, and hopes this Committee will give young people the opportunity to do what a lot of his people didn't have the chance to do, and let these young people become good voting Americans.

Representative Wunsch, Kingman, Kansas, was called upon the the Chairperson to introduce Doug Gaumer at this point.

Doug Gaumer, Youth Governor of the Kansas YMCA Model Legislature, thanked the Committee, and gave his views of HB 2205, and requested the Committee to report the bill to the House with a recommendation it become law.  
(Attachment 1)

Chairperson Harper called Patty James, Douglas Couty Clerk to the floor. Ms. James appeared in support of HB 2205, with one objection regarding registering enrolled students in high school staff only.

The next conferee which Chairperson Harper called to the floor was Bill Blankenship, who is a student at Washburn University, and is the Chairperson of the Associated Students of Kansas. Mr. Blankenship had passed out informational material to the members of the committee prior to the meeting. Mr. Blankenship appeared before the Committee to express ASK's support for HB 2205. (Attachment 2)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections,  
room 526-S, Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m./p.m. on February 17,, 19 83

Lisa Ashner, Student Body President of the University of Kansas, appeared before the Committee in support of HB 2205.

Chairperson Harper called upon Matt McKinney, Associated Executive Director, United School Administration. Mr. McKinney appeared in support of the concept of this bill.

Mary Hope, Shawnee County Elections Commissioner, was now called upon to testify on HB 2205. (Attachment 3). After general discussion, Chairperson Harper thanked Ms. Hope for appearing.

Due to the fact no one else wished to appear on HB 2205, the hearing was closed on this bill.

Considered next on the agenda was HB 2177, An Act relating to elections; concerning absentee ballots, the author being Representative Moore.

Chairperson Harper called Representative Moore to the floor to explain his bill. The Representative stated that this bill only changes two words, but that those two words will save the counties a lot of money, and after more explanation of HB 2177, the Representative asked that the Election Commissioner of Johnson County, Lee Alt come to the floor to testify before the Committee.

A statement for support of HB 2177 was handed out to the Committee members at this time. (Attachment 4). Also handed out to the Committee was a copy of a letter from Marilyn K. Chapman, Commissioner of Elections, Wichita, Kansas, asking for the Committee to give every consideration to this bill and pass it favorably. (Attachment 5)

After some discussion, Chairperson Harper thanked Ms. Alt for testifying before the Committee.

Chairperson Harper noted that the Election Committee has some proposals from the Secretary of State's office, requesting that the Committee introduce them as committee bills.

Due to the fact that the meeting had run late, and another committee was waiting for the room, it was moved by Representative Runnels that the Committee introduce the proposal requests to be considered by the Committee at another meeting. Seconded by Representative Fox. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.





(attachment)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members of The Election Committee:

My name is Doug Gaumer. I am appearing before you today, first, as an individual, as a high school student, and last, but not least, as the present Youth Governor of the Kansas YMCA Model Legislature. I would like to discuss with you for a few minutes my views of House Bill No. 2205, and the proposed amendment under consideration.

When I was invited to appear before this committee, as an individual, I asked myself, "What can I, as a 16 year old, contribute to this committee during its deliberations of this bill?" The more I thought about it, the answer became clear; participation in government starts with the individual, his approval or disapproval of your actions are reflected in the individual's vote. If, as an individual, I do not have enough interest to study the issues, if as an individual, I do not take the time to register, if as an individual, I do not take the time to vote, as elected representatives you will hear no voices except those of special interest groups wanting something for themselves. This invitation made me stop and think about the privilege I will have in one year and two months, the right to vote. Without being properly registered, I cannot exercise this right. The bill under consideration makes it easier for me to become registered as a voter.

As a high school student, I asked myself; "Why us?" Are we more important than the lady in the rest home, are we dif than the man on the street? As High School students, are we being singled out as a privileged group, afforded an opportunity denied

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to other citizens by the passage of this bill? If we are really interested, aren't we capable of driving our car down to the court house to get on the voter rolls?

However, first timers in this world are often given special consideration. Probation is generally considered for the first time offender. Even first time subscribers to magazines are given special price considerations. As first time voters, it makes sense to me a special effort be made to insure we become part of the process.

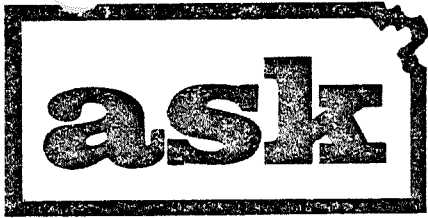
As mature adults if we ignore the process we must face the consequences of indifferent government. As first time voters, we still believe change is possible. With the serious problems we face today, young people must be involved, involved with elected representatives having the courage to make tough decisions, decisions reflecting what is necessary for the good of our State and our country. Your decisions today will affect our lives long after you have left your office.

If this bill becomes a reality, perhaps our voices will become a voice commanding your attention. Perhaps you, as an elected representative will turn attention to our concerns, listen to our ideas.

Finally, I appear before you as Governor of the YMCA Model Legislature. As a candidate for that office, I became aware of the necessity of seeking out every qualified elector, sharing with them my views, and listening to their concerns. I found it necessary to offer a positive program, addressing issues involving a great deal of emotion, conflict between the big city and the small town, Western Kansas versus Eastern Kansas, the same issues you are facing.

Every student attending the YMCA Model Legislature was eligible to vote. They did not have to worry about being registered, being properly recorded on the voter rolls to exercise this privilege. Why should the high school students of Kansas be denied this same privilege?

I endorse the passage of this bill. I urge your consideration on its merits and respectfully request you report the bill to the house with a recommendation it become law.



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF KANSAS

1700 College  
Topeka, Kansas 66621  
(913) 354-1394

Washburn University Campus Organization

William L. Blankenship      Paul A. Sterrett  
Board Member                  Campus Director

Statement By

William L. Blankenship  
Board Member  
Washburn University

For The  
Associated Students of Kansas  
(ASK)

Before The  
House Election Committee

On  
HB 2205

February 17, 1983

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Elections Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be with you today to express the views of the Associated Students of Kansas on House Bill 2205.

My name is Bill Blankenship. I am a student at Washburn University. I represent the students of Washburn as their member on the ASK Board of Directors and have the additional privilege of serving as the chairperson of that board.

ASK is the only active state student association in Kansas. It represents 83,000 students attending the seven public universities in the state.

I am here today to express ASK's support for HB2205.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT: HB2205

A major, ongoing concern of ASK is the encouragement of students to participate in the electoral process. It would be impossible for me to think of anyone in a leadership role in the association who I could even remotely categorize as an anarchist. The leadership, and I believe the vast majority of our members, remain firm believers in the promotion of change through the political system.

To that end, we at ASK make a substantial effort to register students to vote at our member universities.



Preceding the general election of 1982, ASK registered 3,000 new student voters and was recognized for its efforts by the Secretary of State's office. While 3,000 may not seem like much, that is more than the number of registered voters in each of about 30 counties of Kansas.

In voter registration, ASK faces the same problems that face any other group trying to register voters. The cost of advertising through campus media is high and there are limits to the public service announcements we can solicit. This is why HB2205 is so appealing to us.

If enacted, the high schools who volunteer to participate in the program would be able to individually encourage students to register when they turn 18. If these students then decide to attend a public university in Kansas, they would arrive on campus as registered voters.

We think the potential impact of the program outlined in HB2205 is great. Based on population data and national voter registration statistics, HB2205 could result in about 43,000 new voters by the elections of 1984, 112,000 by 1988 and 150,000 by 1992. This, of course, assumes 100 percent participation and success.

However, even at a 50 percent rate, the potential is for the addition of as many new voters by 1984 as there are currently in a county like Cowley or Crawford. By 1992, HB2205 could produce as many new voters as there are currently in Wyandotte County.

The Census Bureau has concluded "that once people make the effort to register to vote, they vote the vast majority of time." HB2205 could represent a commitment by the Kansas Legislature to encourage increased participation in future elections in Kansas.

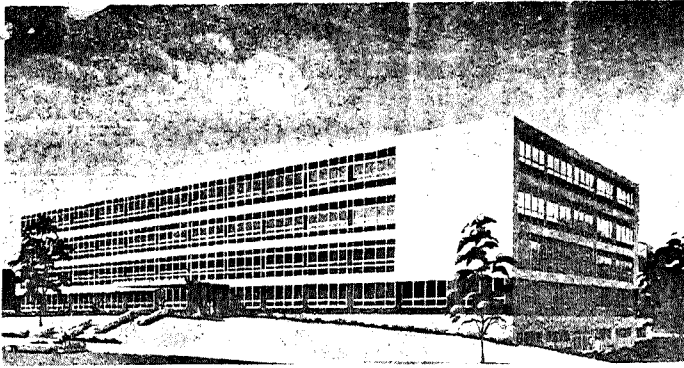
I don't believe that enactment of this legislation would represent a substantial advantage to either of the major political parties. The new voters would be dispersed throughout the state and would be as partisan as any other segment of Kansas society. Speaking for ASK, I know that leaders within the association supported and worked as volunteers in the campaigns of all the major candidates of both parties in 1982. If our constitution allowed us to endorse candidates, we would probably still be debating about to whom we should give our support.

#### CONCLUSION

Because we think HB2205 would be a great step in the process of encouraging greater participation in the electoral process, ASK supports passage of this bill.

In voting to support HB2205, the ASK Legislative Assembly directed the Board of Directors to send a letter to all county election officers and high school principals asking them to participate in the program when it becomes law. We think very highly of this program and if you vote favorably on it, ASK will do all it can to ensure its success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be glad to answer any questions you may have.



(attachment 3)

Shawnee County  
Commissioner of Elections

*Mary F. Hope, Commissioner*

SHAWNEE COUNTY COURT HOUSE

TOPEKA, KANSAS 66603

Phone 295-4066

February 15, 1983

House Elections Committee  
State Capitol  
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: HB 2205 -- VOTER REGISTRATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

The Shawnee County Election Office has established 36 permanent registration outposts which are open year-around for the convenience of its citizens, under the provisions of 25-2303. These outposts have been established in local businesses, in the headquarters of different ethnic groups' organizations, public libraries and Washburn University. (Please note the attached list.)

In the past ten years, members of the Shawnee County Election Office staff have set up temporary voter registration outposts in Shawnee County high schools in the spring of even-numbered years. In spite of this, only 3,019 persons between the ages of 18 and 21 are registered to vote in Shawnee County although it is estimated that there are 10,840 people in that age bracket living here.

I shall be happy to ask the cooperation of the principals of public and private high schools in Shawnee County in establishing voter registration outposts in those locations. I believe the easy access to registration along with registration drives by students and members of the faculty may encourage greater participation by those in the 18 to 21-year-old age group.

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February 15, 1983

Since we always have more than one deputy at a registration location and since all of our current registration locations in Shawnee County are open to all residents in the county, there are a few changes I would like to see made in this bill. I would like to have the phrase "one registered voter" in line 40 and 41 changed to "registered voters" and a change in line 43 from "enrolled students and members of the high school staff" to "eligible citizens of the county". In line 44, "one registered voter" would need to be changed to "registered voters". If we have more than one deputy at each location and make registration at each location available to all residents in the county, other changes may be necessary in section 1.(c) to make it read correctly.

My only other reservation concerning this bill is that I believe election officers already have the authority to set up outpost registration under K.S.A. 25-2303 and special legislation for registration in high schools may not be necessary.



MARY F. HOPE

SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

MFH:ns  
Enclosure

# *Johnson County Election Office*

P.O. BOX 460

135 SOUTH FIR ST.

OLATHE, KANSAS 66061

Statement for Support of H.B. 2177

Submitted by E. Lee Alt  
Election Commissioner  
Johnson County, Kansas

Present legislation provides only for a square in which a voter can place a cross or check mark. H.B. 2177 would allow using parenthesis or squares for ballot printing.

Election offices now being equipped with on-line computer systems present the possibility of printing ballots as needed. However, the systems do not have the capability of printing a "square of the ordinary form".

Printing ballots, as needed, will save the county thousands of dollars each year. The ballots for the general election in 1982 were printed at a cost of .08 each, compared to an estimated cost (by computer) of .01 each. For the November election approximately \$2,000 of printed ballots were not used.

Additionally, the saving of time, by using the computer system, will be an advantage. Presently, after receiving a certified list of candidates, etc., ballots must be type-set, proofed and printed. This often requires as many as 10 days. With this new system, ballots could be mailed as soon as certification is received.

In August of 1982, there were 41 variables of ballots. The computer would print the exact ballots for each individual request - eliminating the time required to proof ballots - but more importantly, eliminating the chance of error in processing ballots.

The reduction in cost, saving of time and elimination of error are all important factors to be considered in allowing the use of a parenthesis on a ballot.

I strongly urge support of H.B. 2177.

*Attch. 4*



(attachment 5)

**SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS**

COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

Marilyn Chapman

COUNTY COURTHOUSE • 510 NORTH MAIN • WICHITA, KANSAS 67203-3798 • TELEPHONE (316) 268-7101

February 9, 1983

The Honorable Richard L. Harper  
Chairman, House Elections Committee  
State Capitol  
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Re: House Bill No. 2177

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you to urge consideration of the bill referenced above which will be presented to your committee soon.

In counties such as Sedgwick where as many as 10,000 absentee ballots may be used in a single election, the use of computers is becoming increasingly important. Our computer system is capable at this time of formulating our absentee ballots. The savings in time and money with an application like this will be significant.

The one thing the computer cannot do, however, is to make a square suitable for a ballot. This bill addresses that shortcoming and would be a progressive step in handling absentee ballots.

I hope that you and your committee will give every consideration to this bill and will pass it favorably. Thank you for your interest.

Yours truly,

Marilyn K. Chapman  
Commissioner of Elections

cc: E. Lee Alt

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