

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

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

9:00 a.m./p.m. on February 25, 1983 in room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Knopp, excused; and,
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:

Jack Brier, Secretary of State, Topeka, Kansas
Jean Barber, Allen County Clerk and Election Officer,
Iola, Kansas
Wanda Coder, Riley County Clerk
Marilyn Chapman, Commissioner of Elections, Sedgwick
County, Wichita, Kansas
Lee Alt, Commissioner of Elections, Johnson County,
Olathe, Kansas

Chairperson Harper called the meeting to order. HB 2467, An Act re-
lating to elections; concerning voting by mail in certain elections
was scheduled for today.

Jack Brier, Secretary of State, was called to the floor by Chairperson
Harper. Mr. Brier explained HB 2467 by Sections to the House Elections
Committee.

After the explanation, Mr. Brier asked for questions from the Committee
members. A general discussion followed at this time.

Chairperson Harper thanked the Secretary of State for appearing before
the Committee.

Called to the floor as the next conferee to testify on HB 2467 was Jean
Barber, Allen County Election Officer, Iola, Kansas. Ms. Barber testified
before the Committee, and ask for their support on this bill. (Attach-
ment 1)

Wanda Coder, Riley County Clerk, appeared before the Committee in favor
of HB 2467.

Chairperson Harper next called Marilyn Chapman, Sedgwick County Commissioner
of Elections, to the floor to testify. Ms. Chapman testified in favor of
HB 2467, and ask that the Committee give this bill serious consideration.
(Attachment 2)

Lee Alt, Johnson County Election Commissioner, appeared before the
Election Committee in favor of HB 2467. (Attachment 3)

As there were no questions at this time, the hearing was closed on HB 2467.

It was moved by Representative Blumenthal to approve the minutes of
February 22 and 23 as written. Seconded by Representative Crumbaker.
Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

(Attachment 1)

COUNTY OF ALLEN

Courthouse

IOLA, KANSAS 66749

Office of: ALLEN COUNTY CLERK - ELECTION OFFICER

(316) 365-7491

February 25, 1983

Representative Richard Harper
Chairman, House Elections Committee
State Capitol - 527-S
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: HOUSE BILL No. 2467
Voting by Mail

Dear Representative Harper:

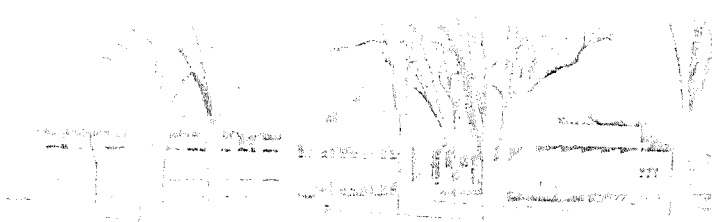
I am here today to testify in favor of passage of House Bill No. 2467. The bill, as introduced, would make it possible for a county election officer to conduct an election entirely by mail in certain nonpartisan question submitted elections.

The option of holding an election by mail would rest with the county election officer. The secretary of state would review and must approve a written plan, including a timetable for the conduct of the election.

Safeguards are written into the bill in such a manner that fraud would be much easier to detect. The voted ballot is returned in an affidavit envelope in much the same manner as absentee ballots are presently handled. The affidavit envelope is completed and signed by the person voting. A signature can be verified by comparing the affidavit envelope and the signature on the elector's registration card on file in the office of the county election officer. The signature of the elector can be verified by office personnel as the return identification envelope is received. Votes cast can be challenged in the same manner as presently authorized by statute.

The provisions of the act will expire in December, 1985 giving election officers a period of time to see if it is as workable as it now appears.

In November, 1979, a special bond election was held in Unified School District 257 involving eight voting precincts. The total expenses incurred for this special election were as follows:



Atch. 1

Representative Richard Harper
Chairman, House Elections Committee
State Capitol, 527-S
Topeka, KS 66612

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Expenses, Special Election, November, 1979

Election Boards (8)	\$1,607.14
Labor in Setting up and Taking down Booths	402.75
Ballots	101.70
Rental of Space	90.00
Legal Publications	65.63
Election Supplies	414.96
	<u>\$2,683.46</u>

The ballot and publications expense would continue. The labor, rental, election supplies and the major expense in salaries to the election boards would be deleted.

A total of 2,671 qualified electors cast ballots in this election. In November, 1979, there were 4,140 qualified electors living in Unified School District 257. The voter turn-out resulted in a percentage of 64.517 of those eligible to vote exercising that right.

Forty people served as election board judges and clerks. Hourly wage now being paid by Allen County is \$3.25 to election board personnel. By having one special election board comprised of five people, the salary expenditure would be greatly reduced. It is estimated this expense would be less than \$200.00. By increasing the election board to nine members, the salaries paid would still be much less, at approximately \$250.00.

Expense in mailing ballots to all registered voters in that school district would be \$828.00.

Voting by Mail, Special Election, November, 1979

Estimated

Election Board (1)	\$250.00
Ballots	101.70
Legal Publications	65.63
Election Supplies	50.00
Postage	828.00
	<u>\$1,295.33</u>

Far outweighing the savings in tax dollars is that the return of the voted ballots should be substantially higher than the 65% turn-out experienced in November, 1979.

Representative Richard Harper
Chairman, House Elections Committee
State Capitol, 527-S
Topeka, KS 66612

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It is my belief that House Bill 2467 is a very workable solution to increasing voter participation while at the same time reducing costs. We are informed that several states now have the provision to vote by mail in question submitted elections and that it results in substantially higher numbers voting.

I, therefore, urge that House Bill No. 2467 be approved. As a county election officer, if the opportunity presents itself, I have volunteered to conduct such an election. I feel that it would be of benefit to the electorate of Allen County.

Respectfully submitted,



Jean M. Barber
ALLEN COUNTY ELECTION OFFICER

(attachment)



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

Marilyn Chapman

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

February 25, 1983

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about voting by mail. The concept of mail ballot elections is not new. It has been successfully implemented in several jurisdictions. In each case the County Election Officer in charge of the election has recommended that the method not only be continued, but expanded.

The outstanding feature of all the vote-by-mail efforts has been the high percentage of voter participation. In the most recent special referendum in Sedgwick County only 23 per cent of the eligible voters exercised their privilege to go to the polls. In similar elections held by mail, "voter turnout" has been as high as 78 per cent. The ease and convenience of this type of election could conceivably reverse the trend of low voter turnout. The opportunity to increase voter participation, awareness, and interest cannot be overlooked.

Additional benefits are that elections could be held more quickly, particularly in voting machine counties, costs could be reduced, and results tabulated quickly.

This is an exciting and progressive idea which I believe should be given serious consideration.

Attch. 2

Officials Urge Voting by Mail

By AL POLCZINSKI
Staff Writer

Kansans could vote by mail in special elections such as the recent tax referendum if Secretary of State Jack Brier and Sedgwick County Election Commissioner Marilyn Chapman get their way.

They say voting by mail would increase turnout.

"This last election would have been a perfect time for it," Chapman said of the Nov. 17 vote on county property taxes.

Brier is eager to explore the question with the Kansas Legislature next year.

Both cite a vote-by-mail election in San Diego last spring on a \$225 million bond issue for a convention center.

Mailed ballots produced a turnout of 261,000 votes from 470,000 registered voters, a turnout of 55 percent. Such a vote, Brier said, is "about twice the normal turnout for a similar election."

ON NOV. 17, about 23 percent of Sedgwick County's registered voters cast ballots. In the eight elections since 1977 that had only local issues on the ballot, only once — on the gay-rights issue in May 1978 — did the turnout exceed 30 percent.

Brier also said the cost would be lower if voting was done by mail.

"The normal cost of such an election is about \$550,000 (in San Diego). The actual cost was something like \$327,000, a 40 percent reduction."

Brier's proposal to the 1982 Legislature, which convenes in January, will call for mail voting on an experimental and voluntary basis and only for non-candidate, non-partisan elections.

The ballot must be simple with a minimum of issues for the trial run, both Brier and Chapman stressed.

IF THE LEGISLATURE approves, Brier said, he would like to try the system both in rural areas where ballots are counted by hand and in areas where ballots are tabulated by computer equipment.

A mail-by-vote system would be similar to that used in Sedgwick County for absentee ballots, Chapman said.

A ballot would be mailed to every registered voter in advance of the election. The voter would mark the ballot, sign the back of the envelope and return it to the election office.

The election commission staff would compare signatures on ballots to voter registration cards on file to prevent fraud.

On the designated election date, ballots would be tabulated and the results announced.

BESIDES ACHIEVING twin goals of reducing costs and increasing voter turnout, Brier said, the system offers a distinct advantage to voters in sparsely populated rural areas.

At election seminars conducted by his staff around the state this year, Brier said, he learned that in some rural areas where townships have been consolidated a voter may have as much as a 52-mile round trip to cast a vote.

The Wichita
Eagle-Beacon

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Monday, November 30, 1981

People?

Using Scarce

another KFH EDITORIAL

FOR TUESDAY - DECEMBER 8, 1981

VOTE BY MAIL!

WOULD VOTING BY MAIL INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT?

KANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE JACK BRIER AND SEDGWICK COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSIONER MARILYN CHAPMAN THINK SO. AND SO DO WE.

VOTING BY MAIL WOULD HAVE THE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF REDUCING THE COSTS OF ELECTIONS, AND PROBABLY WOULD ALSO RESULT IN QUICKER TABULATIONS OF THE RESULTS.

IT WILL TAKE AN ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE TO BRING IT ABOUT IN KANSAS, AND MR. BRIER IS GOING TO ASK THE '82 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, WHICH CONVENES IN JANUARY, TO DO JUST THAT. THE PROPOSAL CALLS FOR MAIL-VOTING ON AN EXPERIMENTAL AND VOLUNTARY BASIS AND ONLY FOR NON-CANDIDATE, NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS. IF IT'S OKAYED, THE SYSTEM WOULD BE TRIED OUT IN BOTH RURAL AREAS, WHERE BALLOTS ARE COUNTED BY HAND, AND IN METROPOLITAN AREAS, LIKE WICHITA, WHERE BALLOTS ARE TABULATED BY COMPUTER EQUIPMENT. IN FACT, IT'S NOT UNLIKE THE SYSTEM NOW USED IN SEDGWICK COUNTY FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS. IT WOULD WORK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

A BALLOT WOULD BE MAILED TO EVERY REGISTERED VOTER PRIOR TO AN ELECTION. THE VOTER MARKS THE BALLOT, SIGNS THE BACK OF THE RETURN ENVELOPE, AND MAELS IT TO THE ELECTION OFFICE. AS THEY ARE RECEIVED AT THE ELECTION OFFICE, THE ENVELOPES REMAIN SEALED, AND THE SIGNATURES ARE CHECKED AGAINST THE VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS ON FILE. ON ELECTION DAY, ALL THE ENVELOPES CONTAINING BALLOTS ARE OPENED, MECHANICALLY. AT THIS POINT, THE ENVELOPES ARE FACE DOWN AND THE SIGNATURES ARE NOT VISIBLE. IN THIS WAY, ALONG WITH OTHER SAFEGUARDS, THE SECRECY OF THE BALLOT IS GUARANTEED. AT A DESIGNATED TIME ELECTION DAY, THE BALLOTS ARE TABULATED, BY COMPUTER.

WE BELIEVE THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO A VOTE-BY-MAIL SYSTEM

ON A TRIAL BASIS IN KANSAS.

KFH & KBRA believes in expressing its opinions. When the subject of a KFH Editorial is controversial, KFH will make equal time available for other points of view.

Johnson County Election Office

P.O. BOX 460

135 SOUTH FIR ST.

OLATHE, KANSAS 66061

Statement of Support for H.B. 2467

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

Two of the major concerns of election officials are:

1. voter participation
2. increasing costs of elections

With these concerns in mind, I offer these comments in support of "mail ballot" elections.

If a "question submitted" election were held in Johnson County under present procedures, the cost would be estimated at \$59,203 - - If the same election could be held as a "mail ballot" election, the estimated cost would be \$35,480 - - a saving of \$23,723.

At the last county wide "question submitted" election, there was a 12% voter participation. In states where "mail ballot" elections have been held, the percentages range from 54% to 92%.

The 12% election equates to \$3.50 per vote. Based upon a 60% estimated turn out (and I predict a higher percentage than that), the same election by mail would cost 45¢ per vote.

As the life-style of our population changes, I believe it behooves us as election officials and you as lawmakers to consider any technique which, if administered properly, would provide a greater voter participation at a reduced cost.



Board of County Commissioners / Johnson County Courthouse / Olathe, Kansas 66061

Janet D. Leick
Commissioner, 4th District
(913) 782-5000 Ext. 504

February 24, 1983

Mrs. E. Lee Alt
Johnson County Election Commissioner
Johnson County Election Office
135 South Fir Street
Olathe, Kansas 66061

Re: House Bill No. 2467

Dear Lee:

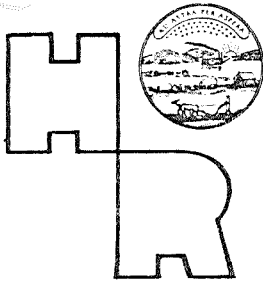
This is to advise you that the Board of County Commissioners unanimously agreed to support House Bill No. 2467, thus enabling mail ballot elections under the conditions as specified.

Thank you for your continued input upon specific bills, as it is sincerely appreciated by our Board.

Best regards,

Janet D. Leick, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner, Fourth District
Board of County Commissioners

JDL:nf
cc:Board of County Commissioners



KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
Human Resources
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEXICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

109 W. 9th St., Suite 200, Topeka, Kansas 66612 (913) 296-3465

John Carlin
Governor

James M. Apodaca
Executive Director

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Ulysses

TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON ELECTIONS CONCERNING H.B. 2198

by James M. Apodaca
Executive Director

A major function of the Kansas Advisory Committee on Mexican American Affairs is to serve as liaison between the Kansas Hispanic Community and state government. It is charged with the responsibility to inform the legislature of policy issues affecting the Hispanic Community. Such an issue involves voter registration.

I would like to express support for H.B. 2198 providing for voter registration on election days. Notwithstanding some minor problems that would result in its administration, we feel that H.B. 2198 embodies and enhances every citizens' inalienable right to vote. We feel that the registration and voting process should facilitate and encourage all of our citizens to vote and to participate in our democratic system.

Specifically, the process outlined in H.B. 2198 would tend to encourage Hispanics to register to vote if they were aware that interpreters could be made available to explain the registration process. We feel that volunteers could be available to assist in this activity. This system would also help our present volunteers who have to respond on a case-by-case basis for assistance.

In summary, we feel that H.B. 2198 will enhance citizen participation in our elections and we urge its passage.

2-23-83

P

The Honorable Richard L. Harper, Chairperson
Committee on Elections
House of Representatives
Third Floor, Statehouse


Dear Representative Harper:

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note for House Bill No. 2198 by
Representative Hensley

In accordance with K.S.A. 75-3715a, the following fiscal note concerning House Bill No. 2198 is respectfully submitted to your committee.

The subject act provides for voter registration on election day. The act lists several responsibilities for the Secretary of State and county election officers in carrying out registration under terms of the act.

The exact fiscal impact of this bill, should it be enacted, cannot be predicted, because we cannot know how many additional poll workers would be required to carry out registration activities as permitted by the act. It is probably reasonable to assume that additional expenditures by some counties would be significant. Supplies and training expenses would be in addition to any salary expense incurred.


Dwayne Sackman
Principal Budget Analyst
For the Director of the Budget

DS:sr