

Approved

R.H. 2-14-85  
Date

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

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

9:00 am a.m./p.m. on Thursday, February 14, 1985 in room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Helgerson, excused  
Representative Johnson, excused

Committee staff present: Myrta Anderson, Legislative Research Department  
Ramon Powers, Legislative Research Department  
Mary Hack, Revisor of Statutes Office  
Eric Rucker, Secretary of State's Office  
Dottie Musselman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Gjerstad, District #98

Chairperson Harper called the meeting to order and recognized Representative Gjerstad.

HB 2192 and HB 2193, both of which Representative Gjerstad had requested to be considered as committee bills, were explained and copies of her testimony was handed to each member. (Attachment 1). Attention was called to the amendment on lines 37 - 39 on HB 2192, which would direct the poll workers to place signs at the point of the physical barrier informing handicap voters of the option to fill out an absentee ballot. The amendment found in the new subsection (e) would direct the poll workers to place signs directing voters to the accessible entrance if it is other than the main entrance.

HB 2193 -- currently the statutes do not specify where the election commissioners place a polling location. Representative Gjerstad noted that HB 2193 would place the obvious constraint on placement, within the geographic boundaries of the precinct, and thus serve as a convenience to the voters by having their polling location within a reasonable proximity of their home.

Following the briefing of the above bills, considerable discussion followed. At this time, it was suggested by Chairperson Harper that more study should be directed to HB 2192 and HB 2193, and discussed in committee at another time.

Representative Runnels passed out a copy of a letter from Mary Hope, Shawnee County Commissioner of Elections, and called attention to the opposition of HB 2193 by that office. (Attachment 2)

Representative Justice made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 12, 1985, meeting. Seconded by Representative Flottman. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

*attached 1*

STATE OF KANSAS

DIANE A. GJERSTAD  
REPRESENTATIVE NINETY EIGHTH DISTRICT  
WICHITA  
4560 S HYDRAULIC LOT 126  
WICHITA, KANSAS 67216



TOPEKA

HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS  
MEMBER FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS  
INSURANCE  
LABOR AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Chair, members of the committee thank you for considering HB 2192 and HB 2193 as committee bills. My reasons for requesting these amendments are derived from experiences we had with transporting voters to the polls during the last election.

Current Kansas law provides that any voter who gets to the polling location but can not enter the building will be allowed to fill out an absentee ballot in the presence of two poll workers who then cast the vote on the machine and void the ballot. The problem is that voters are not aware of this provision. There are a small but significant number of voters who risk bodily injury when attempting to surmount physical barriers, i.e. steps. My amendment, on lines 0037 - 0039 of HB 2192, would direct the poll workers to place signs at the point of the physical barrier informing these voters of this option.

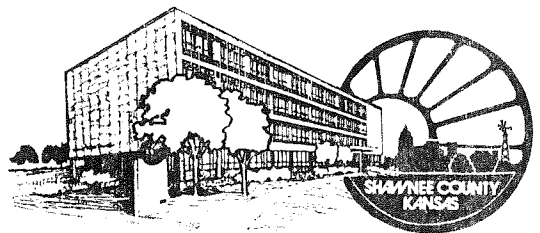
It is difficult to place all polling locations in buildings which are accessible to the physically challenged and older buildings are often accessible at an entrance other than the main entrance. The amendment found in the new subsection (e) would direct the poll workers to place signs directing voters to the accessible entrance if it is other than the main one.

*H. Elect. 2/14/25  
(attachment #1)*

HB 2193 -- Currently we do not specify where the election commissioners place a polling location. HB 2193 would place the obvious constraint on placement - within the geographic boundaries of the precinct. This would serve as a convenience to the voters by having their polling location within a reasonable proximity of their home. In urban areas a great deal of confusion comes from having polling locations in rural areas. The purpose of this bill is to put a reasonable constraint on the placement of polling locations.

Thank you for considering these bills.

(attachment 2)



**Shawnee County  
Commissioner of Elections**

Mary F. Hope  
Election Commissioner  
JoAnna Mitchell  
Asst. Election Commissioner

Shawnee County Courthouse  
Room B-12 • 200 E. 7th  
Topeka, Kansas 66603  
(913) 295-4066

February 13, 1985

Representative Judy Runnels  
State House  
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Judy:

I would like to express my opposition to HB 2193.

Shawnee County has several polling places which serve more than one precinct. In some instances, it is because they are ideal locations which are completely accessible to the handicapped voter. In our continuing efforts to provide polling places which are accessible to the handicapped, we need the flexibility the law now permits us in establishing polling places.

We also have precincts which have very few voters. They are the result of recent annexations to the city. We do not add them to the nearest city precinct because they are in a different senatorial, representative or county commissioner district. These precincts often involve such a small area that no possible polling place exists.

We have had previous experience with laws requiring a polling place in every precinct and often found it necessary to redraw precinct boundary lines for the sole purpose in taking in a possible polling place. This resulted in some precincts with very confusing boundary lines.

We hope that the members of the House Committee on Elections will agree that we need the flexibility of the present laws in establishing polling places in order to comply with state and federal laws concerning the accessibility of polling places to the handicapped as well as to avoid some of the other problems we have had in years past.

Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Mary F. Hope*  
Mary F. Hope

MFH:ns

cc: Representative Richard Harper

H. Elect. 2/14/85  
(attachment #2)