

Approved 3/21/89
Date

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

The meeting was called to order by Representative Kenneth R. King at
Chairperson

9:10 a.m./p.m./on Thursday, March 16, 1989 in room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Johnson, excused
Representative Foster, excused
Representative Gregory, excused
Representative Sebelius, excused

Committee staff present:

Myrta Anderson, Legislative Research Department
Fred Carman, Revisor of Statutes Office
Ellie Luthye, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Senator Michael Johnston
Secretary of State Bill Graves
Fred Logan, State Chairman of the Republican Party
Mark Tallman, Legislative Director of ASK

The meeting of the Election Committee was called to order by Chairman Kenneth R. King at 9:10 a.m.

The Chair briefly explained SB 1 and then called on Senator Michael Johnston as the first proponent. Senator Johnston presented written testimony supporting reinstatement of a Kansas presidential preference primary, feeling this system is more democratic and far superior to the caucus system. (Attachment I)

Secretary of State Bill Graves next presented written testimony to the committee. He stated he felt it was important for the people of Kansas to be given a convenient chance to participate in selecting candidates for the nation's highest office. (Attachment II)

The Chair acknowledged Fred Logan, State Chairman of the Republican Party. He stated he was speaking in an individual capacity and not as the State Chairman of his party. He testified he was endorsing a presidential preference primary because he did not believe most of the time presidential caucuses are party builders. He felt a presidential primary could be a party builder by 1) enhancing voter registration through a primary system and 2) the primary would enhance the possibility of more affiliations by voters with parties, feeling it is healthy for people to be affiliated with either the Democratic or Republican party. He proposed two changes to the bill:

1. Allocation and selection rules be left to the political party
2. change the date to read the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March

Following each of the above presentations, the Chair opened the floor for questions.

The Chair next called on Mark Tallman, Legislative Director of ASK. He presented written testimony in support of SB 1. (Attachment III)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections,
room 521-S Statehouse, at 9:10 a.m./~~p.m.~~/ on Thursday, March 16, 1989

The minutes of the Elections Committee on March 14th were presented for approval. Representative Lucas moved the minutes be accepted as presented. Representative Wilbert seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

The next meeting of the Election Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 21st, 9:00 a.m. in Room 521-S.

GUEST LIST

COMMITTEE: Elections DATE: March 16, 1989

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	ADDRESS	COMPANY/ORGANIZATION
Horse W. Eubank	1113 Armagh	Tappan
	Topeka	(3 Counties)
Mars D. Galt	Topeka	AST
Jana Atchison	Topeka	KPDC
Carl Williams	Topeka	KPDC
Fred Logan		Rep. Hdq.
Sec. of State Hoover		
Senator Johnston		

State of Kansas

Senate Chamber

MICHAEL L. JOHNSTON
SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER
SENATOR, FOURTEENTH DISTRICT
LABETTE COUNTY AND PARTS OF
CRAWFORD, MONTGOMERY AND
NEOSHO COUNTIES
P.O. BOX A
PARSONS, KANSAS 67357-0040



Office of Democratic Leader

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1565
913-296-3245

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

MEMBER. ELECTIONS
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
INTERSTATE COOPERATION
LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL
APPORTIONMENT
LEGISLATIVE COORDINATING COUNCIL
WAYS AND MEANS

House Elections Committee

Statement of Senator Michael L. Johnston
in support of Senate Bill 1 - Kansas Presidential Primary
March 16, 1989

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for this opportunity to appear in support of reinstatement of a Kansas presidential preference primary, a concept I have promoted for over twelve years.

Although the chairmen of both the Kansas Democratic and Republican State Committees and many others favor a presidential primary in 1992, I'm sure you will hear testimony from a few opponents. Most of the opposition is theoretical in nature and based on the assumption that political parties are weakened by primaries. I have seen no evidence to show that to be the case in the 36 states that held presidential primaries in 1988.

Reality, not theory, is the basis for the proposal to reinstate a presidential primary election in Kansas in 1992. Caucuses are time-consuming, confusing, and undemocratic when compared to primaries, because only a small percentage of the

Attachment I

Johnston statement, p. 2

electorate participates in the caucus process. A primary will likely encourage and result in a large turnout, as it did in 1980 when about 474,000 or 43% of our state's eligible voters participated -- the largest voter turnout for a primary election in Kansas history.

You may hear testimony that political parties exist to win elections and govern. I would suggest rather that parties exist to provide philosophy and organization for candidates, whose responsibility it is to win elections and do the governing.

Some opponents of the presidential primary process contend that the media, especially television, will have too much impact on the electorate's primary decisions. It is obvious that since we live in an electronic media age, we are going to get much of our information about candidates through the media, and that will happen whether we have primaries or caucuses. Restricting the candidate selection process to caucuses does not necessarily mean that the electorate will depend less on the media.

To those who say that primaries are too expensive, I would respond that all elections are expensive, but that is the price we must pay to protect our rights in a democracy.

Some also assert that primaries tend to be divisive. Actually, in terms of party identification, voter registration, and consideration of candidates and issues, primaries may enhance the efficacy of political parties.

In summary, based on our Kansas primary experience in 1980 and our most recent caucus experience in 1988, the advantages of

Johnston statement, p. 3

primary elections far outweigh any advantages the caucus system may afford. The simple fact that the participation rate in primaries is over ten times that of caucuses demonstrates that the primary system is more democratic, especially since the invitation to participate in a primary election is extended to the same electorate that is responsible for casting general election ballots.

I firmly believe that based on fact, rather than theory, a presidential preference primary is far superior to the caucus system and definitely worth the cost to the state. The Senate has approved reinstatement of a Kansas primary two years in a row. I would urge the members of the House to do likewise and pass Senate Bill 1.

Bill Graves
Secretary of State



2nd Floor, State Capitol
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STATE OF KANSAS

HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
March 16, 1989

Testimony of
BILL GRAVES
Kansas Secretary of State
on Senate Bill 1

The foundation upon which our democratic system of government is built is participation by the people. In primary and general elections, from the courthouse to the statehouse to the United States Senate, people are given every possible opportunity to cast a vote for the candidate of their choice.

The image I most often associate with democracy is of a man or woman being handed a ballot, walking into a small voting booth and marking an X next to the candidate of their choice.

It is, without a doubt, the most fundamental act a good citizen may perform. Voting is an exercise in citizen responsibility that our society should encourage and our government should promote. In my view, a presidential preference primary would help do that in Kansas.

A presidential preference primary will not always be the great success it was in 1980. Record numbers of voters will not always turnout. The cost will never be

Attachment II

small enough to quiet all the critics. The date on which it's held will, occasionally, not be quite right.

But the truth of the matter is, that all of that doesn't really matter.

What matters is people, Kansas people, being given a convenient chance to participate in selecting candidates for this nation's highest office.

A current phrase being used by the National Ad Council to encourage voter participation says it best:

How can our democracy be of the people and for the people, if it's not by the people.

* I support a stand-alone primary as proposed in Senate Bill 1.

* I support allowing the political parties to fashion their own delegate selection rules as proposed in Senate Bill 1.

* And I can support any date agreeable to the legislature, knowing full well there will be opportunity to change the date if circumstances require it.

I urge your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 1.

1973



1988

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF KANSAS

15 Years In The Student Interest

TO: House Elections Committee
FROM: Mark Tallman, Legislative Director
DATE: March 16, 1989

RE: Testimony on SB 1 - Presidential Preference Primary

Position

ASK supports the establishment of a Presidential primary election in Kansas.

As an organization of student government associations, ASK is mainly concerned with issues in higher education. However, a central tenet of our organization has always been that students should participate in the decision-making process that affects them, which necessarily includes the political process. Indeed, ASK to a large extent emerged in response to the Twenty-Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing 18-year-olds the right to vote.

We support the establishment of a Presidential primary election for one reason: we believe it would encourage students to be more involved in the process of choosing a President than the current caucus method. Although some students participate in the caucuses, many more do not for a variety of reasons. A primary is easier to understand, more direct and more convenient.

Because the election of a President is usually the most visible campaign in the public eye, we believe heightened student involvement in this area will broaden student interest into other areas. As a result, we believe this proposal will increase electoral participation by an important part of the public.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment III

Suite 407 • Capitol Tower • 400 S.W. 8th St. • Topeka, Ks. 66603 • (913) 354-1394

The Student Governments of the Regents Institutions

Emporia State University • Fort Hays State University • Kansas College of Technology • Kansas State University • Pittsburg State University • University of Kansas • Wichita State University