

Approved 2-15-90
Date

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

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

9:07 a.m./p.m. on Thursday, February 8, 1990 in room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Foster, excused
Representative Baker, excused

Committee staff present:

Pat Mah, Research
Arden Ensley, Revisor
Ellie Luthye, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Secretary of State Bill Graves
John Koepke, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards

The meeting of the House Election Committee was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Chairman Kenneth R. King on Thursday, February 8, 1990. The meeting was conducted by Vice-Chairman Tim Shallenburger due to illness of the Chairman.

The order of business for the meeting was hearings on HB 2819, concerning registration of voters, and HB 2820, amending the mail ballot election act.

The Chair called on Secretary of State Bill Graves who presented written testimony in support of these two bills. He believed both bills offer a means to provide Kansans greater access to the electoral process and encouraged the committee to give favorable recommendation to both bills. (Attachment I)

Following questions by the committee Vice-Chairman Shallenburger declared the hearings on HB 2819 be closed.

Next to appear before the committee was John Koepke, Executive Director of the Kansas Association of School Boards, who spoke in support of HB 2820. He stated that school boards who have used mail ballots in the past have recorded a higher voter turnout as opposed to conventional elections. He requested the committee give favorable consideration to HB 2820 and to possibly amend HB 2374, which they asked to have introduced last year, into the bill. (Attachment II)

Representative Sader stated that in the Shawnee Mission School district there was an elected Advisory Board to the Board of Education and she felt it advisable to have this Board included in the bill. Secretary of State Graves encouraged this amendment.

Following a period of questions and discussion, the hearings on HB 2820 were closed.

The minutes of the meeting on February 6th were presented to the committee for approval. Representative Lucas made a motion they be approved, seconded by Representative Jones. The motion carried.

Arden Ensley, Revisor, asked the committee for authority to work with the Secretary of State to rephrase some of the language in HB 2820. This approval was given with the suggestion this wait to see if any amendments would be added.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections,
room 521-S, Statehouse, at 9:07 a.m./p.m. on Thursday, February 8, 1990

Secretary of State Bill Graves offered to give a mini-briefing to the committee on what is happening with legislation on the federal level in regard to dramatic changes in voter registration across the United States. This meeting will be scheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting of the House Election Committee will be Tuesday, February 13th, 9:00 a.m. in Room 521-S.

Bill Graves
Secretary of State



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STATE OF KANSAS

Testimony of
**Kansas Secretary of State
Bill Graves**
to House Elections Committee
on H.B. 2819 & H.B. 2820
9 a.m., February 8, 1990

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members:

As always I welcome the chance to appear before you. I am especially pleased to have this opportunity today because of my enthusiasm for both House Bill 2819 and House Bill 2820. I believe that both bills offer you the means to provide Kansans greater access to our electoral process.

Such opportunities are especially important in light of recent efforts in Congress to pass legislation that intrudes on state prerogatives to set its own policy on voter registration. I believe that it is important that we send a message to Washington. A message that says Kansas is taking bold measures to enhance access to voter registration and to generate even higher voter participation.

House Bill 2819 is a pleasant concession to technology. It gives Kansans a greater opportunity to register to vote by reducing the deadline for the closing of registration books from 20 days to 15 days.

The deadline is necessary to permit county election officers to verify residence and thus prevent election fraud. The advent of computers allows us to propose a 15-day deadline.

I firmly believe that I will be back in front of this committee in a few years seeking to reduce the deadline to 10 days. Many election officers believe that 10 days would work now, others have reservations. The 15-day deadline will give election officials time to adjust and set the stage for further reductions in the future.

Because we know that many people wait until the last moment to decide to participate, this bill opens the registration window of opportunity even wider.

House Bill 2820 expands the use of mail ballot elections. Kansas has been a leader in voting by mail and the process has been extremely successful. Voter participation in special

Attachment I

Elections 2-8-90

question elections has averaged more than 75 percent for the 77 mail ballot elections which have been held, compared to about 25 percent for conventional elections.

House Bill 2820 expands the use of voting by mail to school board and city candidate elections. Voter turnout in these elections has been dismal. Unless there is an unusually heated race, turnout is guaranteed at less than 30 percent.

I believe that any potential pitfalls from this proposal are far out-weighted by the potential to increase voter participation in these vital elections.

I do understand that a minor technical flaw needs to be corrected, and would also encourage the committee to consider a sunset provision. The original mail ballot election act in 1983 contained a sunset provision. After the success of voting by mail was demonstrated, the sunset provision was removed. As was the case then, allow us to test this new idea while providing a timely review of the process. A sunset provision will allow you to make a decision about continuing this form of voting by mail without speculation. You can review the success or failure of the system and then make an informed decision.

I encourage the committee to give its favorable recommendation to both bills. The purpose of any election is to determine the will of the majority, not to test the determination of the voters. House Bill 2819 and 2820 will help us improve our delivery of democracy to the people.

Thank you.

Below is a list of the actual number of people who have voted by mail ballot in Kansas. The chart also reflects the number of ballots issued and the percentage of turnout for each election.

ELECTION	BALLOTS ISSUED	VOTED	PERCENTAGE OF TURNOUT
1. City of Protection	394	309	89.04
2. USD 233, Olathe	16,162	10,827	73.07
3. USD 229, Blue Valley	7,288	4,988	73.96
4. Linn County	4,323	2,856	70.33
5. City of Coffeyville	6,804	4,559	81.05
6. USD 200, Greeley County	1,017	849	83.48
7. USD 262, Valley Center	3,827	2,430	70.23
8. USD 392, Osborne County	2,201	1,571	80.01
9. USD 400, Lindsborg	3,011	1,858	75.70
10. USD 400, Lindsborg	3,267	2,652	82.45
11. City of Arkansas City	5,856	4,251	79.00
12. USD 437, Auburn-Washburn	7,633	4,838	66.00
13. USD 465, Winfield	6,813	4,754	75.00
14. City of Clearwater	900	603	67.00
15. USD 417, Council Grove	3,098	2,103	74.30
16. City of Halstead	923	634	71.00
17. USD 413, Chanute	6,301	4,891	86.88
18. Sedgwick County	175,376	118,801	75.02
19. USD 461, Neodesha	2,369	1,606	76.00
20. USD 257, Iola	4,608	3,763	90.55
21. City of Liberal	6,347	4,508	86.01
22. City of Independence	4,818	3,027	73.30
23. City of Eastborough	598	409	70.00
24. USD 466, Scott County	2,921	2,215	84.00
25. USD 362, Prairie View	2,317	1,605	75.00
26. USD 229, Blue Valley	10,151	5,958	64.60
27. Barton County	2,529	2,150	87.00
28. USD 512, Shawnee Mission	26,862	16,795	69.30
29. USD 215, Lakin	1,363	1,095	80.00
30. USD 260, Derby	8,693	5,949	74.60
31. City of Fairway	2,687	1,698	66.10
32. USD 290, Franklin County	5,821	3,635	72.00
33. Sedgwick County	163,464	99,790	66.90
34. Harvey County	14,378	8,433	64.00
35. City of Parsons	5,620	3,817	80.00
36. USD 266, Sedgwick County	3,125	1,999	68.80
37. USD 263, Sedgwick County	2,305	1,415	66.50
38. USD 364, Marshall County	3,713	2,715	74.00
39. Scott County	2,769	1,860	70.00
40. City of Anthony	1,284	1,038	81.00
41. USD 400, McPherson, Saline, & Ellsworth	3,155	1,995	71.00

42. City of Overland Park	47,770	25,209	60.70
43. City of Leawood	9,360	4,448	50.60
44. City of Countryside	238	182	80.50
45. USD 200, Greeley County	1,065	836	78.00
46. Edwards County, South Brown Twnshp Rd. Resolution 81-1	53	53	100.00
47. USD 233, Johnson County	19,420	10,419	54.00
48. USD 437, Shawnee County	7,545	4,626	63.00
49. USD 264, Sedgwick County	1,797	1,149	67.40
50. USD 368, Miami County	4,557	2,804	75.00
51. Smith County	3,279	2,481	79.50
52. USD 440, Harvey County	1,741	1,062	65.70
53. USD 241, Wallace County	869	592	70.00
54. USD 364, Marshall County	3,528	2,656	79.30
55. Russell County	4,701	3,441	77.00
56. USD 253, Lyon County	10,972	7,282	75.00
57. USD 229, Johnson County	12,386	8,338	72.00
58. USD 466, Scott County	2,814	1,998	79.00
59. USD 422, Kiowa County	1,465	1,034	75.30
60. USD 289, Franklin County	N/A	N/A	N/A
61. USD 265, Sedgwick County	4,465	2,784	69.00
62. USD 407, Butler County	4,523	3,266	98.58
63. USD 384, Riley County	847	595	72.00
64. USD 239, Ottawa County	N/A	N/A	N/A
65. USD 437, Shawnee County	9,534	6,035	65.00
66. City of Anthony, Harper County	1,364	954	76.00
67. USD 233, Johnson County	27,462	16,966	66.00
68. USD 298, Lincoln County	1,815	1,457	84.00
69. City of Eldorado, Butler County	6,023	3,427	69.67
70. USD 232, Johnson County	4,160	3,310	81.50
71. USD 372, Shawnee County	1,382	1,086	82.20
72. USD 446, Montgomery County	N/A	N/A	N/A
73. City of Bentley, Sedgwick County	158	101	69.00
74. USD 470, Cowley County	N/A	N/A	N/A
75. USD 267, Sedgwick County	N/A	N/A	N/A
76. USD 482, Lane County	N/A	N/A	N/A
77. USD 311, Reno County	N/A	N/A	N/A



Testimony on HB 2820
before the
House Elections Committee
February 8, 1990

by
John W. Koepke, Executive Director
Kansas Association of School Boards

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the 302 member boards of education of the Kansas Association of School Boards. We regret that our members have not had the opportunity to discuss and take a position on the issue which is the primary subject of HB 2820. We therefore cannot express an opinion on their behalf regarding the subject of the use of mail ballots for candidate elections.

School boards have, however, had several years history with the use of mail ballots for question submitted elections. That history shows a significantly higher voter turnout for any mail ballot election held during that period of time as opposed to conventional elections during the same time period. For that reason, many school boards have chosen to hold all their question submitted elections by mail ballot.

During the past year, however, we have been made aware that several county election officers have refused school board requests to hold mail ballot elections, even though the cost would be borne by the

local school board. For that reason, we asked late in the 1989 session that HB 2374 be introduced. That bill would require that school district bond issues be held by mail ballot if the school board so requests. We would hope that you would give favorable consideration to that measure, either in its own right or as an amendment to HB 2820, should you decide to look favorably on that measure.

We appreciate your willingness to listen to our concerns, and I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions.