

Approved 3-15-90
Date

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections

The meeting was called to order by Representative Tim Shallenburger, Vice-Chairman at
Chairperson

9:10 a.m./p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 1990 in room 521-S of the Capitol.

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

Committee staff present: Pat Mah, Research
Arden Ensley, Revisor
Ellie Luthye, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Ron Thornburgh, Office of the Secretary of State
Elgia Stevenson, Johnson County Election Commissioner
Cathy Whitaker, Executive Director of the Kansas Republican Party

In the absence of Chairman Kenneth King, Vice-Chairman Tim Shallenburger called the House Election Committee to order at 9:10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13th.

The order of business for the day was hearings on three Senate bills, SB 565, concerning absentee ballots; SB 574, relating to political parties and SB 693, providing for establishment of a centralized voter registration database.

The Chair called on Ron Thornburgh, Secretary of State's office, to present his testimony which was in support of SB 565. He stated the present law that requires all absentee ballots to be consecutively numbered slows down the process, and with computerization of absentee voting procedures, more secure and less expensive control measures are now available. (Attachment I)

Elgia Stevenson, Johnson County Election Commissioner, appeared next before the committee, also in support of SB 565. She stated that manual numbering of election ballots is not cost-effective and no longer necessary with the computerization of absentee ballots. She further stated with the computerized system she felt there was less chance of fraud than with the numbering system. (Attachment II)

Following questions, the Chair closed hearings on SB 565.

The Chair next called for hearings on SB 574. Ron Thornburg gave a brief explanation of what the bill would accomplish. The Chair then called on Arden Ensley, Revisor, who went over each section that would be repealed. He stated the sections that would be repealed in SB 574 concern the size and composition of the central committee and other structural changes.

Following discussion the chair closed hearings on SB 574.

The hearings were then opened on SB 693. First to appear before the committee in support of this bill was Ron Thornburgh, Office of the Secretary of State. He stated this bill would allow the Office of the Secretary of State to establish a single format to be used throughout the state, thus allowing candidates, political parties and various organizations to use the data file. (Attachment III)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE House COMMITTEE ON Elections,
room 521-S, Statehouse, at 9:10 a.m./p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 1990

Cathy Whitaker, Executive Director of the Kansas Republican Party, next presented testimony in support of SB 693. She stated with a centralized list Kansas has the mechanism in place to begin eliminating the inequities between the counties, but more importantly, this would allow for accurate and timely purging of the voting lists. (Attachment IV)

Written testimony was presented by Myrna Stringer, League of Women Voters of Kansas, and James W. Parrish, Democratic State Chair. The testimony of both urged support of HB 693. (Attachments V & VI)

The hearings were closed on SB 693.

The minutes of the meeting on March 2nd were presented for approval. There was one change in the minutes addressing the amendment by Representative Blumenthal. The amendment was regarding campaign subpoena powers rather than disclosure. Following this correction Representative Cates made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Representative Wilbert. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m. The next meeting of the House Election Committee will be Thursday, March 15th, Room 521-S.



Bill Graves
Secretary of State

2nd Floor, State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612-1594
(913) 296-2236

STATE OF KANSAS

TESTIMONY OF RON THORNBURGH
HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
MARCH 12, 1990

SB 565

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee.

SB 565 changes the requirement that all absentee ballots must be consecutively numbered and allows that they "may" be numbered. This bill was requested by the Sedgwick County Election Commissioner because it is expensive and cumbersome to number the ballots in this manner.

Originally the numbering system was required as a measure of ballot control. With computerization of the absentee voting procedures, more secure and less expensive control measures are now available. In addition, the current numbering system leads many voters to question their ballot secrecy.

This bill would allow those counties who choose to continue manually numbering the ballots to do so. Those counties who have the capabilities to use different, yet equally secure ballot control systems, can make use of their available resources.

Thank you.

Attachment I

Elections 3-13-90

The
**Kansas
Republican
Party**

(913) 234-3416
214 West Sixth Topeka KS 66603

Testimony by
Cathy Whitaker
Kansas Republican Party
March 13, 1990

Rochelle Chronister
State Chairman
Lyle D. Pishny
Vice Chairman
Duane Nightingale
Treasurer
Janet Boisseau
Secretary

Catherine E. Whitaker
Executive Director

I am Cathy Whitaker, and I am Executive Director of the Kansas Republican Party. I am here to voice my support for S.693 dealing with a centralized voter registration list.

Across the United States the trend is towards centralized voter registration lists, housed by the Secretary of State. This includes: Washington state, Kentucky, New Mexico, Texas, California, Arizona, Ohio, Illinois, Colorado and Louisiana. Both Michigan and Connecticut are in the process of working on a centralized list.

I was asked to talk about the problems the Republican Party had with the voter registration list. During 1989 the Kansas Republican Party collected the voter registration lists from all 105 counties. At the conclusion we had:

- 16 counties on Magnetic Tape
- 8 counties on Tape Cartridge
- 65 counties on 8" Diskette
- 3 counties on 5 1/4" diskette
- 2 counties on 3 1/2" Diskette and
- 11 counties on Hardcopy

During the collection process, several counties were simply unresponsive.

One month after requesting the information I still did not have any response from 37 counties -- by response I mean a phone call or a letter informing the Party when to expect the voter list. I do not mean the actual list of voters. One month later, 37 counties -- complete silence.

This includes county clerks from both parties.

We did not receive the last voter list until two months after the original request. My understanding is that in the open records rule the County Clerk has 3 days to inform

me on what format I should expect the voter list and then needs to supply me with the list in a reasonable time. Again, the Party did not receive the last voter list until two months after the original request.

Let me go over some of the problems we have discovered in the process.

- One county charges extra for addresses.
- Several counties refuse to give vote history.
- Some counties claim they do not keep vote history, and how they purge a list is a mystery to me.
- One county clerk did not know what purging meant.
- Each county had there own little codes for townships, cities, or precincts. Several times we had to recontact the county clerk just to read the information we had bought.
- One county claimed they could not give us there format, so we contacted the Kentucky-based computer firm that set-up their system for the format.
- All 11 of the hardcopy counties could have given us the voter list on tape or diskette, but refused, either because they simply did not know how to do it or they did not want to be bothered.

The biggest problem I see in all of this disparity, is the problem of purging. Several counties are so lax about this process that I am sure Kansas has several dead people still eligible to vote. Almost every time I conduct a precinct school, I will hear about someone ineligible to vote under Kansas law, still on the voter list in the County Clerk's office.

With a centralized list Kansas has the mechanism in place to begin to eliminate the inequities between the counties. But more importantly we will have the mechanism to allow for accurate and timely purges of the list. Hopefully, monitoring that the counties are indeed purging the list.

I thank the committee for its time.

LWVK

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS

919½ South Kansas Avenue Topeka, KS 66612 (913) 234-5152

March 13, 1990

STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE in support of Senate Bill 693.

Chairman King and Members of the Committee:

I'm Myrna Stringer representing League of Women Voters of Kansas.

This year League of Women Voters is 70 years old. As you may know League of Women Voters was organized as an outgrowth of the womens suffrage movement, and the first local League in the nation was founded in Wichita, Kansas in 1920.

Nationally the three main objectives of the League of Women Voters were--and are today--to educate the voters, to work for "needed legislation" and to "awaken the electorate" to participate in government.

This past year League of Women Voters of Kansas has had a special project on Voter Advocacy. Ann Heberger, whom many of you know, has co-chaired (with Ellen Laner) this project and "taken the show on the road" using League's "grassroots" effort to find out why people don't vote.

Nationally we support the "motor-voter" bill.

101 of the 105 Kansas counties have voter registration handled by the County Clerk who also has other responsibilities as well as monitoring a large geographic area for accurate registration information. The 4 urban areas have large numbers of people to track.

A centralized database in the Secretary of State's office and rules and regulations administered from one central point that all 105 counties would use, would improve the reliability of the system and make it uniform.

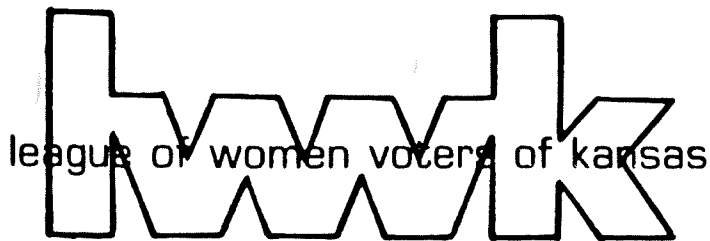
We urge your consideration of Senate bill 693.

Thank you.

Myrna Stringer
League of Women Voters of Kansas

Attachment V

Election 3-13-90



VOTER ADVOCACY PROJECT

BEVERLY KOMAREK
PRESIDENT
GREAT BEND, KS

ANN HEBBERGER — ELLEN LANER
VOTER ADVOCACY PROJECT CO-CHAIRS
OVERLAND PARK, KS MISSION HILLS, KS

ANALYSIS - VOTER ADVOCACY PROJECT

The League of Women Voters of Kansas in conjunction with the League of Women Voters Education Fund initiated a three-phased Voter Advocacy Project in the fall of 1989. The goal of the Project is to examine the reasons and discuss alternatives to voter apathy in presidential elections.

The first part of the Project was a statewide survey of citizens' opinions concerning voting issues. The LWVK in cooperation with the Urban Information Center at the University of Kansas Regents Center obtained data from 4,317 persons.

As the second phase of the Project, the LWVK convened four regional public meetings in October and November to discuss the reasons for low voter turnout in the 1988 presidential election. Meetings were held in Johnson County, attended by citizens of Johnson, Wyandotte and Douglas Counties; in Salina with Newton and Great Bend people participating; in Wichita; and the fourth meeting was co-sponsored by the Institute of Public Affairs, Fort Hays State University in Hays. A similar discussion took place at a League meeting in Emporia. Two hundred and fifteen people attended the meetings. Of those, eighty-eight filled out evaluation forms.

The survey participants were one-third men and two-thirds women and evenly dispersed through the ages of eighteen to over sixty-five. A broad geographic cross section (in fourteen locations) of Kansas residents were represented. Respondents were from all levels of education with one-third having some high school education, less than half some college and one-fifth with some graduate college education. The income range of respondents covered a range of over one-fourth with household incomes below \$20,000, about one-half with household incomes between \$20,000 and \$45,000 and the remaining one-fourth with household incomes over \$45,000.

The results showed the higher the income level and the more extensive the education, the more likelihood the person would be registered and had voted. 71% of those whose household income was under \$10,000 are registered, whereas 95% of those whose household income is at least \$60,000 were registered. 93% of those with a four-year college education voted in the presidential election and 75% of those with a high school education voted in November, 1988.

Although the survey and the evaluation forms of the regional meetings were different, consensus on certain items appeared. Both the evaluation form and surveys supported improvement in the nominating process. The survey addressed a presidential primary specifically with 72% favoring a primary. The evaluation form showed 76% favoring change in the nominating process; of those over 50% commented in favor of a nominating primary.

Meeting participants overwhelmingly (83%) felt there should be more effort to register voters. A large number of those surveyed (86%) were registered. Citizens gave as their major reason for not being registered: "new resident or address change" (49%), "too busy" (21%), "not interested" (10%), and "inconvenient registration hours" (7%). Those 27% who did not vote in the 1988 presidential election answered their reason for not voting: "didn't like either candidate" (27%), "too busy or forgot about it" (26%), and "vote doesn't make any difference" (23%).

In questions regarding presidential costs, regulation of allocations and the length of the campaign, the answers were a little different. 90% of survey respondents felt the amount of money spent for presidential campaigns should be limited and two-thirds indicated they thought the campaign should be shortened. Meeting participants (60%) felt presidential funds should be allocated with restrictions. Such restrictions would include (1) no negative advertising; (2) more meaningful presentation of issues; and (3) limit expenditure of "tax" dollars.

Opinions varied over satisfaction/dissatisfaction of media coverage and First Amendment infringement by regulation of the media. Although there was general dissatisfaction or somewhat satisfaction with television, radio and newspaper coverage of the election. The survey showed most of the satisfaction seemed to come from public radio and television. Those attending the meetings were concerned with limiting negative advertising and placing more emphasis by the media on the issues, but only 32% were for and 45% said "no" to governmental regulations of the media.

Meeting evaluators were ambiguous in their feelings about giving the political parties more power: yes, 28%....no, 42%....no answer, 23%. (No survey question.) Written comments expressed mostly negative opinions about party power.

A large majority (77%) of meeting respondents favored change of the electoral college. One-fourth of that percentage was for abolishment and one-fourth for direct election of the president.

The third phase of the Project will begin with a statewide meeting to be held with the University of Kansas in Lawrence on April 27th. At this meeting, further directions for the Project and the continued search for solutions to voter apathy will be addressed.



KANSAS
DEMOCRATIC
PARTY

March 13
~~February 23,~~ 1990

James W. Parrish
State Chair

The Honorable Kenneth King, Chair
House Elections Committee
State Capitol Building
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Senate Bill 693

Chairman King and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas State Democratic Party fully supports the amendments contained in Senate Bill 693.

A statewide data base will significantly reduce the problems we have encountered in obtaining accurate information on voter registration. Instead of having to contact the 105 county clerks across the state, we would be able to gather registration lists in one easy step. This would lessen our staff's work load, not to mention the demands placed upon the time and resources of county clerks' offices.

Moreover, better access to registration records will greatly aid efforts to keep track of voters who move frequently. It will facilitate improved voter registration in general, an advantage that applies to the Democratic as well as the Republican Party.

Wider voter participation is certainly in the best interests of our democratic system of government, and we appreciate the positive consideration of this bill by the committee.

Thank you for inviting the party to comment on the proposal and for your concern with improving voter registration.

Most sincerely,

James W. Parrish
Democratic State Chair

JWP:mgs

Attachment VI

Election 3-13-90

