

Approved 2-20-90
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

The meeting was called to order by Senator Don Sallee at
Chairperson

1:30 ~~xxx~~/p.m. on February 13, 1990 in room 529-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: or excused

Committee staff present:

Pat Mah, Legislative Research Department
Ardan Ensley, Revisor of Statutes Office
Clarene Wilms, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Ron Thornburgh, Office of Secretary of State
Marilyn Chapman, Sedgwick County Elections Commissioner
Elja Stevenson, Johnson County Elections Commissioner

Others attending: See attached list

The meeting was called to order shortly after 1:30 p.m. by Chairman Don Sallee.

Ron Thornburgh, Office of the Secretary of State, appeared before the Committee requesting that the Committee introduce a bill that would create a centralized voter registration data system which would allow a statewide compilation in one single location. He noted there would be no request for funding this year but the use of a uniform registration card would be implemented for use throughout the state. Mr. Thornburgh was asked whether it was planned to computerize all counties before the bill would become effective and he noted that about 98 counties were already using a computer system.

Senator Bond moved to accept the bill request and Senator Yost seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Marilyn Chapman, Sedgwick County Elections Commissioner and Chairperson of the County Clerks' Association appeared to present testimony on SB-565. Ms. Chapman noted county election officers around the state number absentee ballots. Numbering was originally designed as a ballot control measure but is no longer necessary as computerization provides a more effective protection. The computer code serves as a control system and would, therefore, eliminate expense as well as additional manpower needs. (Attachment 1)

Elja Stevenson, Elections Commissioner, Johnson County, appeared before the Committee in support of SB-565 and noted computerization provides a numbering system. Elimination of the hand numbered system would allay fears that the ballot is identifiable and eliminate lengthy telephone conversations concerning the numbering of absentee ballots. (Attachment 2)

Senator Yost moved to report SB-565 favorable and that it be placed on the Consent Calendar. Senator Bond seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

Marilyn Chapman

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

February 12, 1990

SB 535

In checking with county election officers around the state I have discovered that the reason most of us number our absentee ballots is because that is the way we have always done it.

In the beginning I am sure that this was designed as a ballot control measure, but for most Kansas counties this is no longer true. Computerization has provided more effective protection than a manual numbering system has ever been able to do. In addition, voter complaints about ballot secrecy are wide-spread because voters feel that their ballot could be traced by the numbering system that is now in use.

I urge you to pass this bill favorably. To do so would in no way jeopardize the integrity of absentee voting and would be a big step toward progressive election administration.

Senate Elections
2-13-90
Attachment 1



TO: Senate Elections Committee

FROM: Elgia C. Stevenson

Elgia C. Stevenson

SUBJECT: Merits of SB 565

DATE: February 12, 1990

The intent of SB 565 is appreciated by the staff of the Johnson County Election Office.

We recognize the variety of election systems used in Kansas and understand the original concepts which directed the numbering of ballots. In our county, many years of mechanized voting has caused a large portion of our voting population to be unfamiliar with the paper ballot and its number. Many perceive the ballot, with their votes, to be identifiable through the number entered on the ballot face.

In major elections, 8,000 to 10,000 absentee ballots are issued. Although we have not maintained an absolute log of telephoned concerns, we do offer a conservative estimate of 1% of those voters who do call with emotions ranging from quiet, sincere concern to the emotional oratory of a crusader defending the right of privacy.

Following verification that a voter is registered, our automated system prints two mailing labels and the ballot(s) for a voter. Each item is imprinted with a unique number. Once the order is entered, a lock out prevents issuance of another ballot to that voter. When the ballots are returned, the unique number is re-entered to the main file to show receipt of a voted ballot.

We have full confidence in the security of our ballots and believe that numbering the ballot is an extra step we could eliminate. The option offered in SB 565 is the logical solution to operating elections within the various systems within Kansas.

Thank you for considering SB 565 and hopefully, you will approve its passage when it is presented for a vote.

*Senate Elections
2-13-90
Attachment 2*