

Approved 3-5-90  
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

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

1:30 ~~am~~/p.m. on February 26, 1990 in room 529-S of the Capitol.

All members were present ~~except~~

Committee staff present:

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

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Connie Stewart, AFL-CIO  
Ron Thornburgh, Office of Secretary of State  
Cathy Whitaker, Republican Party  
Myrna Stringer, League of Women Voters of Kansas  
Written testimony from Jim Parrish, Democratic Party  
Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Don Sallee called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Connie Stewart, AFL-CIO, appeared in support of SB-693 stating her organization believed the bill to be a non-partisan issue with a broad range of support from both political parties. Ms. Stewart noted that many problems were encountered in trying to gather information from the various counties, therefore making the collection of information very difficult. Ms. Stewart further noted that SB-693 would prevent the necessity of dealing with 105 different sources of information. (Attachment 1)

Ron Thornburgh, Office of the Secretary of State appeared in support of SB-693 noting the bill would allow establishment of a single format for voters' registration to be used throughout the state. The Secretary of State's office would not assume the duties of maintaining original voter registration but would merely collect information from the counties and make it available to others. There would be no fiscal impact during the present year with later costs of the system being paid for by those requesting information. (Attachment 2)

Cathy Whitaker, Republican Party, spoke in favor of SB-693 noting there were many different types of data base systems and there were some counties which fail to respond to requests for information. Concern was expressed as to whether the records were being properly purged and Ms. Whitaker further noted that a centralized system could provide a mechanism to assist in keeping the records up to date.

Myrna Stringer, League of women Voters of Kansas spoke in support of SB-693 noting her organization had three major objectives, to educate the voters, to work for "needed legislation" and to "awaken the electorate" to participate in government. Ms. Stringer stated her organization felt a centralized database in the office of the Secretary of State with rules and regulations administered from one central point would improve the reliability of the system and make it uniform. (Attachment 3)

Chairman Sallee told committee members he had received a communication from Jim Parrish, Democratic Party, which spoke of support for SB-693. Mr. Parrish noted a statewide data base would significantly reduce the problems encountered in obtaining accurate information on voter registration. Also, better access to registration records would benefit registration drives and get-out-the vote campaigns. (Attachment 4)

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

room 529-~~S~~Statehouse, at 1:30 a.m./p.m. on February 26, 1990

Connie Stewart, AFL-CIO, appeared in support of SB-694 which would permit the governor to authorize any state agency designated by the Secretary of State as a voter registration site to assist in registering votes. Ms. Stewart noted almost everyone has some business with government agencies and could easily register to vote at that time if it were permissible. It was stated that agency-based registration is a flexible and cost-effective method of registration. (Attachment 5)

Ron Thornburgh, Office of the Secretary of State, spoke in support of SB-694 noting there was a bipartisan bill presently before the U.S. Senate which would provide automatic voter registration for anyone obtaining a driver's license and would require registration at major government offices and by mail. The Office of the Secretary of State believes that states, including Kansas, should take the initiative in providing greater access to the electoral process and that SB-694 would send a message to Washington that Kansas is taking steps to enhance access to voter registration and generate even higher participation. (Attachment 6)

Discussion noted the lack of substantial numbers of government offices in rural areas and that it would be beneficial to provide non-government registration agencies. Concern was expressed as to how to avoid fraud. It was noted the system in the Secretary of State's office could deal with purging the registration records as well as setting rules and regulations.

Senator Johnston moved to report SB-693 favorable for passage. Senator Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Senator Rock moved to report SB-694 favorable for passage with a second from Senator Lee.

Discussion considered the fact that authority was not provided to appoint deputies and in certain circumstances some individuals might not be cooperative in appointing deputies.

Senator Johnston made a substitute motion to conceptually give the Secretary of State the authority to appoint deputies. Senator Rock seconded the motion.

Discussion noted the bill did not authorize outposts and this would permit such authorization.

The motion carried.

Senator Reilly moved to pass SB-694 favorable as amended. Senator Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.

GUEST LIST

SENATE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

DATE February 26, 1940

(PLEASE PRINT)  
NAME AND ADDRESS

ORGANIZATION

CATHY WHITAKER

KS - GOP

Michael Woolf

Common Cause

CONNIE STEWART

KS AFL - CIO

Jean Sallee

Ann Hebbinger

LWVK

Myrtle L. Strong

League of Women Voters of Kansas

Suzanne Rene Evans

Student

Deborah R. Strong Horton, Ks.

PBC Horton Prison

Barlene Aake Horton, Ks.

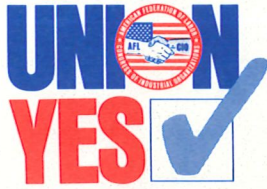
Observer

LOREN STEEL

SRS

Anne Smith

Ks. Assoc. of Counties



President  
**Dale Moore**

Executive Secretary  
Treasurer  
**Jim DeHoff**

Executive Vice  
President  
**Wayne Maichel**

Executive Board

*Delton Baxter*  
*Eugene Burrell*  
*Jim Dickson*  
*Garold Good*  
*Jack Gray*  
*David Han*  
*Jim Hastings*  
*John Hoover*  
*Mike Krasovec*  
*Kenneith Miller*  
*Roger Naylor*  
*John Rider*  
*Wallace Scott*  
*Debbie Snow*  
*Russell Ward*  
*John Weber*  
*Wayne Wiannecki*

## Testimony On SB 693 Presented to the Senate Elections Committee

By

**Connie Stewart**  
**Kansas AFL-CIO**  
**February 26, 1990**

Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Connie Stewart and I am representing the Kansas AFL-CIO. I am here today to testify in support of SB 693, which authorizes the Secretary of State to establish a state-wide registered voters file.

Our organization has for many years considered the registration of our members the highest priority. We work constantly to maintain accurate lists of our registered and unregistered members and communicate with the membership regularly on the importance of exercising their constitutional right of participation in the political process. We conduct non-partisan voter registration activities on a regular basis in our efforts to achieve our goal of 100% member registration.

Despite the advancement of the computer age, the voter rolls in Kansas have hardly budged out of the nineteenth century. Our problems encountered in trying to obtain information and compile data used to improve the quality of our membership registration files, have been too numerous to list here. Suffice to say, even gathering simple information regarding, for example, a list of precincts and how they are coded in the county voter file for a handful of counties proved to be a six-month long process requiring repeated phone calls and letters by the Secretary of State's office. The expense and difficulty of having to deal with 105 counties in order to gather information of public record is beyond most people's imagination. Trying to compile a state-wide file is both exorbitantly expensive and extremely difficult because of the myriad of formats and software programs used at the county level.

Systematizing voter registers is not a partisan issue. It is simply



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good government. All participants in the political process will benefit to the detriment of none.

Increased opportunity for full electoral participation and decreased opportunity for fraud are two reasons why a state-wide voter file is more than a tedious housekeeping chore. One of the most commonly used arguments against progressive voter-registration legislation is potential for fraud. With this legislation, you will reduce the risk for voter fraud to a point where it will be almost non-existent. It will be a simple task for the computer to identify any possible duplicate registrations across county lines.

Well-kept records result in evaluation of voter registration and outreach efforts to bring under-represented populations into the political mainstream. With a future where more and more elections will surely be done by mail, accurate lists will be essential to running valid elections.

With a central computerized register, doubtful registrations can be cross-checked with property tax rolls and driver's license records. Maryland, for example, requires public agencies to make monthly reports to the State Administrative Board of Election Law giving notice of deaths, conviction of felonies and name changes. The Board may also confer with the post office and public service providers about address changes. Michigan's Secretary of State is required to notify local election officials of residents who have died or surrendered their Michigan driver's license upon moving.

In summary, the valid reasons for supporting a state-wide voter file are many, while it is virtually impossible to find valid arguments against it. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and respectfully request your favorable consideration of SB 693 in the interest of good government.



Bill Graves  
Secretary of State



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

## STATE OF KANSAS

TESTIMONY OF RON THORNBURGH  
SENATE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 26, 1990

SB 693

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I appear before you today in support of SB 693. This bill would enable the office of the Secretary of State to establish a statewide voter registration database.

Currently in the state of Kansas we have numerous voter registration formats in use. This bill would allow our office to establish a single format to be used throughout the state thus allowing candidates, political parties and various organizations to use the data file.

Under this bill we would not assume the duties of maintaining original voter registration. We would merely collect information from the counties and make it available to others.

SB 693 will have no fiscal impact this year since we would only be formulating a plan of implementation. Later costs of implementing the system would be paid for by those requesting the information.

Thank you.

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Attachment 2

# LWVK LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS

February 26th, 1990

STATEMENT TO THE SENATE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE in support of Senate bill 693

Chairman Salee 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 Hebberger, 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

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Attachment 3



KAN-45  
 DEPARTMENT  
 OF STATE

February 23, 1990

Mr. Chairman  
 Senate

The Honorable Dan Sallee, Chair  
 Senate Elections Committee  
 State Capitol Building  
 Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Senate Bill 693

Governor Sallee 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 benefit our registration drives and get-out-the-vote campaigns. We would be able to pinpoint areas where registration is low, locate voters who have let their registration lapse and generally improve our knowledge of and contact with Kansas voters. These advantages apply 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.

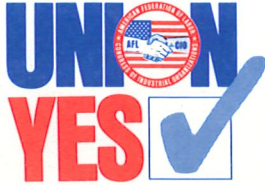
Most sincerely,

James W. Parrish  
 Democratic State Chair

DLF:mgf

Senate Election  
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President  
Dale Moore

Executive Secretary  
Treasurer  
Jim DeHoff

Executive Vice  
President  
Wayne Maichel

Executive Board

*Delton Baxter  
Eugene Burrell  
Jim Dickson  
Garold Good  
Jack Gray  
David Han  
Jim Hastings  
John Hoover  
Mike Krasovec  
Kenneth Miller  
Roger Naylor  
John Rider  
Wallace Scott  
Debbie Snow  
Russell Ward  
John Weber  
Wayne Wiannecki*

## Testimony On SB 694 Presented to the Senate Elections Committee

By

**Connie Stewart  
Kansas AFL-CIO  
February 26, 1990**

Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Connie Stewart and I am representing the Kansas AFL-CIO. I am here today to testify in support of SB 694, which authorizes the governor to authorize any state agency designated by the Secretary of State as a voter registration site to assist the Secretary of State's office in registering voters. On behalf of the Kansas AFL-CIO and our thousands of members across the state, I urge you to recommend SB 694 favorable for passage.

Our organization has always considered the participation of our members and all eligible citizens in the electoral process to be a very important responsibility. It is not a responsibility we take lightly. Every year we devote thousands of hours and thousands of dollars to our efforts to assist our members in registering to vote, on voter education and getting them to the polls.

America's democratic promise is to include all our citizens in the nation's decisions. That promise has not been kept. Too many of our citizens still stand outside the process. We are the only western democracy which places the burden of registration on the individual. In all other western democracies, it is the responsibility of government to maintain the voter rolls.

In time, all states will have to address the growing concern over registration barriers. Indeed, the focus on these concerns on a national level indicate that, in time, if states do not take steps to simplify the registration process themselves, the U. S. Congress will mandate reforms.

One common argument we hear frequently against simplification of the registration process, is that people should consider voting a



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privilege and should be willing to invest a little time and effort in becoming eligible to vote. Indeed, those of us actively involved in the political process frequently have little patience with the public apathy so frequently encountered. However, if the public has become apathetic about our system, we need look no further than the system itself for the cause. Too many cumbersome and antiquated legal and administrative impediments stand in the way of registering voters.

The net effect of registration barriers is to quietly disenfranchise the powerless. Agency-based registration is one of the most effective and efficient ways to make voter registration accessible to citizens. Almost everybody has some business with government agencies. Kansans renew their driver's licenses at the Department of Motor Vehicles; renew their auto tags in county buildings; pay their water bills at city buildings; camp in state parks; or apply for unemployment benefits at Job Service Offices.

Each of these agency visits can provide an additional convenient, quick and cost-effective service to the public by affording a chance to register to vote or to update a registration.

The results of agency-based registration are impressive. Ohio instituted agency-based voter registration on July 3, 1984. With a voting age population of 7,836,000, Ohio increased its registered voters by 800,000 to a record 6,358,558 by October, 1984. Over 70,000 of those were registered through state agencies. In New York, 10,000 people were registered through public agencies in just two weeks.

Agency-based registration is a flexible and cost-effective method of registration. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I respectfully request your favorable consideration of SB 694.

Bill Graves  
Secretary of State



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

## STATE OF KANSAS

TESTIMONY OF RON THORNBURGH  
SENATE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 26, 1990

SB 694

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

A bipartisan bill now before the U.S. Senate would provide automatic voter registration for anyone obtaining a driver's license and require registration at major government offices and by mail.

The office of the Secretary of State believes that states, including Kansas, must take the initiative in providing greater access to the electoral process. We believe it is vital that we send a message to Washington. A message that says Kansas is taking bold steps to enhance the access to voter registration and generate even higher participation.

Change can be disturbing, but if we're to grow it is necessary. Given the climate in Washington, we may have no choice about the matter. It is our hope that through innovative, bold measures we may retain control of our destiny, while improving access to the electoral process for thousands of Kansas.

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