

MINUTES OF THE SENATE ETHICS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vicki Schmidt at 9:30 a.m. on February 12, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Mike Heim, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carolyn Long, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Ralph Ostmeyer, Kansas State Senator
Janet Chubb, Assistant Secretary of State
Brenda McCants, Sherman County

Others attending:

See attached list.

The Chair opened the hearing on **SB 168—Uniform electronic transactions act; failure to register unlawful**. Ken Wilke, office of the Revisor of Statutes, explained that this bill parallels HB 2042 and came originally from the joint committee on administrative Rules and Regulations as a result of examining some proposed regulations offered by the Secretary of State's office pertaining to electronic transactions. It would make it unlawful for any person who has not been approved and registered by the Secretary of State as a registered certification authority to advertise, offer for sale, sell, or perform any service providing certification of a digital signature within the state. There needs to be an additional technical amendment on line 37 to the internal reference that is incorrect.

Janet Chubb, Assistant Secretary of State, spoke in favor of the bill stating that this was strictly a legislative issue concerning the language. The Uniform Transactions Act relates to digital signatures and this bill makes it clear that any state agencies must do business with a registered business in Kansas (Attachment 1).

There being no further questions the hearing was closed on **SB 168**

The hearing on **SB 171—Sherman county; election of county commissioners** was opened. The Chair asked for an explanation of the bill by the Revisor's Office. It was stated that this bill would make technical changes to existing law concerning the election of county commissioners in Sherman County by extending the option of electing at-large members for the Sherman County Commissioners to coincide with that of at-large members for city commissioners and school board. This would require a resolution so that this could be put on the ballot, hopefully as early as April. This also includes a sunset provision of 2010 giving Sherman County 18 months to get this on the ballot. This is a re-generation of **HB 2307**.

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, sponsor of the bill, was introduced and referenced his written testimony (Attachment 2). In response to a question from Senator Wysong, the senator stated that **HB 2307** got hung-up in conference committee previously. According to Senator Ostmeyer, it is clear that this is the desire of the community as they have already established at-large positions for the school board. The Senator also introduced a letter from Lowell Coon (Attachment 3).

The Chair introduced Brenda McCants, representing Janet R. Rumpel, Sherman County Election Officer, who spoke in favor of the bill and presented written testimony from herself, Ms. Rumpel and others in favor of the bill (Attachment 4)

Written testimony in support of **SB 171** was also submitted by:

Kevin Rasure, Rasure Lumber, Inc. (Attachment 5)

The Chair thanked those appearing and closed the hearing on **SB 171**.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Ethics And Elections Committee at 9:30 a.m. on February 12, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

Chairman Schmidt called for final action on **SB 117–Elections; certain political advertising; disclosure requirements.** The Chair reminded the committee that Carol Williams submitted a substitute bill to **SB 117** and that the language is in KAR-19-20-4 and they are seeking to put the language in a statute as that is where the majority of people would look for clarification. The new language actually amends the statute and reconciles 2541-56 and 2541-56(a). Subsection C is not new. It is current law.

Senator Brungardt moved, Senator Reitz seconded, to recommend substitute for **SB 117** as amended favorably for passage. Motion carried.

SB 103–Elections; certain local units of government; primaries was opened for final action . This returns that language back to the original 2007 language. An amendment was introduced by the Secretary of State's office with the goal to decrease the amount of primaries. Currently if there are three candidates for a position a primary is held.

Senator Kultala moved that **SB 103** be passed as originally written with the intent that we take a year to look at appropriate language and possibilities, seconded by Senator Brungardt. Motion carried.

Hearing on **SB 79–Election; changing filing deadlines for candidates.** Federal ballots are currently mailed before the filing deadline and the desire is to move the deadline from June 10 to May 10.

Senator Brungardt felt moving this date 30 days would limit some candidates from filing and moved the deadline be moved two weeks earlier from June 10th, seconded by Senator Reitz. Motion carried.

Senator Reitz moved to recommend **SB 79** favorably for passage as amended. Seconded by Senator Apple. Motion carried.

Senator Schmidt called for final action on **SB 168–Uniform electronic transactions act; failure to register unlawful.**

Senator Kultala moved that **SB 168** be moved out favorably for passage with the inclusion of a technical amendment on line 37 as suggested by the Revisor's Office, seconded by Senator Reitz. Motion passed.

Senator Apple moved, Senator Brungardt seconded that **SB 171–Sherman county; election of county commissions** be moved out favorable. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2009.

RON THORNBURGH
Secretary of State



Memorial Hall, 1st Floor
120 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1594
(785) 296-4564

STATE OF KANSAS

Testimony – Secretary of State

February 12, 2009

House Judiciary Committee

SB 168

by the Committee on Ways and Means

The Kansas Legislature adopted the Kansas Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (KUETA) in the spring of 2000, KSA 16-1601 *et seq.* The KUETA authorized businesses, state agencies and citizens to transact business electronically using a variety of electronic signatures. The only electronic signature addressed by SB 168 is the digital signature.

A digital signature is issued by a third-party provider known as a certification authority. The KUETA provision being amended by SB 168 currently states that "Any person before entering upon the duties of a registered certification authority, shall" (paraphrased) register with the Secretary of State and meet the requirements of regulations adopted by the secretary, among other.

SB 168 would clarify (paraphrased) that it is unlawful for any person to sell or service digital signatures before being approved and registered with the Secretary of State.

If it is the Legislature's intention that any certification authority must be registered with the Secretary of State before selling or servicing digital signatures in Kansas, this amendment is desirable, because it will clarify that registration is required.

The Secretary of State believes it was the Legislature's original intention to require all certification authorities to file with the Secretary of State before selling and servicing digital signatures, and, for that reason, our office supports SB 168.

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STATE OF KANSAS



TOPEKA
SENATE CHAMBER

RALPH OSTMEYER
SENATOR, 40TH DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 97
GRINNELL, KS 67738-0097
STATE CAPITOL
300 S.W. 10TH, ROOM 262-E
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(785) 296-7399
ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

VICE-CHAIR: AGRICULTURE
MEMBER: FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
AND REGULATIONS

February 12, 2009

Madam Chair Schmidt and members of the Ethics and Elections Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you on SB 171, a bill I requested on behalf of Sherman County.

Sherman County is one of the largest counties in my Senate District and already has the option of electing at-large members for City Commissioners and School Board members. This bill extends that option for Sherman County Commissioners.

A Sherman County Commission designee will testify in favor of SB 171. Written testimony in opposition from Lowell Coon, a resident of Sherman County, is also being provided to you .

We need to remember local government provides the most direct services to residents. Senate Bill 171 would allow the electorate in Sherman County options for its county governance. Again, this is a local issue. The Legislature would be granting them the right to vote for or against governance changes with passage of SB 171.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph Ostmeyer".

Ralph Ostmeyer
Senator 40th District

Senate Ethics and Elections Cmte
Date 2-12-2009
Attachment 2

Lowell Coon
605 E. 5th St.
Goodland, KS 67735
(785)890-7433

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer
State Capital Building
262 East
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Senator Ostmeyer and Committee members:

I wrote this letter and it was published in the Goodland Star-News on January 30, 2009. I am pleased to provide it to you and hope that it will be read and taken to heart as you discuss the issue of at large voting for Sherman County.

To the editor,

I have, with much anxiety, followed the debate about electing County Commissioners at-large. After reading the stories in the Goodland Star-News about the Sherman County commissioner meetings in the paper many things bothered me. One central theme to my apprehension seemed to be a lack of cohesiveness in the commission and the county in general. I think that the at-large issue is one of many things that are contributing to this problem. Last fall in conversations with state representatives and several local leaders I had been assured that this divisive topic was dead. Now, I am afraid that I was misled.

It is not that the election of County Commissioners at-large is not popular, as one of the commissioners pointed out; it is that morally I have issues with the idea. As a point of fact I estimated (before any polling was done on the issue) that about 73% of the population of Sherman County would support the concept. I did not come to this estimate at random I simply went to the census data and it showed that about 73% of the population in the county lives in Goodland. According to the article in Goodland Star-News around 70% of the people in the polls supported the issue my reaction then is, "NO, DUH". My worry, however, is that one of the commissioners has stated that they will "push" the issue. Specifically, I am concerned that this issue will divide the county and will be morally unacceptable by some.

It is my opinion that the "minority" that oppose the election at-large issue should vehemently oppose the issue as they may lose any representation in the county government even though they and their holdings would account for the majority of the area in Sherman County. This "minority" that I refer to is simply the population that lives outside the city limits of Goodland. Districts, simply, give us the ability to divide the county into areas so that each AREA is represented by a different commissioner. At-large voting, in its most simplified form, is everyone in the county voting for every seat on the commission. The most populated area then will easily control the commission. We do not have this type of majority rule in American Government because our forefathers saw it as a version of taxation without representation (you may recognize this as one of the themes leading to the revolutionary war, as I said a very divisive issue). Many people still though mistakenly believe that our democracy is based on majority rule even though we in Western Kansas should know better. We have a house and senate in the legislature for a reason and districts in the house and senate so that each area will still be represented in the state government (sparsely populated or not). If we

Senate Ethics and Elections Cmte

Date 2-12-2009

Attachment 3

elected strictly at-large in the state government the uproar from this area would be heard throughout the country and I venture to say there would be community meetings about splitting the state so that the eastern half would not control all of our tax dollars. This is why I have moral issues with the idea that we should elect commissioners at-large even within the county itself. I think this type of system is what our forefathers fought against. I believe it was Calvin Coolidge who is credited with stating something like "true leaders need to have the courage to do what is right, not what is popular or easy." In this case I am afraid that what is right is not what is popular. So my question is who will our "true" leaders be?



Lowell Coon

605 E. 5th St.
Goodland, KS 67735
(785)890-7433

February 10, 2009

Ethics and Elections Committee
Kansas State Legislature

Re: SB 171-Sherman County Commissioners At Large

Dear Committee Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am here representing those citizens of Sherman County who wish to have the opportunity to vote on whether they want the County Commissioners elected at-large. In response to the request of the Sherman County Commissioners in May, 2008, the Government Services Alliance Committee established three (3) forums to gain citizen feedback pertaining to the election of commissioners at-large. All three of the forums had an overwhelming majority response allowing the citizens to determine the outcome of the at-large district voting for county commissioners.

Historically other levels of government within the county had districts, but over the years these were changed to at-large. Specifically, the City of Goodland and the Goodland School District were drawn up with wards and districts, but over the years voters agreed to elect those people at-large.

Approximately 70 percent of the county residents live in the City. Included in that number are a good percentage of farmers who live in the City. The goal is that our citizens be fairly represented by their elected choices. The loss of population has changed the political landscape in the western part of the State; and we feel that the at-large voting is better for the whole county.

We believe that Senate Bill #171 allows the citizens of Sherman County to make the choice of all of our commissioners, not limiting them to their district. The Sherman County Commissioners make decisions jointly, not individually and we feel our citizens should be able to elect their entire County Commission. We ask that you please vote favorably so that our citizens can make an equitable choice in electing their county commissioners.

You each have documents in support of Senate Bill #171 as well as data gathered from the public forums held in Sherman County. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Brenda McCants

1019 E. 10th Street

Goodland, Kansas 67735

Senate Ethics and Elections Cmte

Date 2-12-2009

Attachment 4

SHERMAN COUNTY

Sherman County
Clerk
813 Broadway Room 102
Goodland, KS 67735
Phone: 785-890-4802
Fax: 785-890-4809

February 9, 2009

To: Senate Ethics and Elections Committee

Re: SB171

Dear Committee Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of SB171 which would allow for the citizens of Sherman County to have the opportunity to vote on whether they want the county commissioners elected at-large, at-large (similar to the way the school board members and city commissioners are elected).

As the County Election Officer, I have first hand knowledge of what the voters have expressed! In Sherman County we have one polling place for all of our precincts. I am at the polling place at every election and I hear first hand the grumblings and complaints from voters who question me as to why they weren't allowed to vote for the Commissioner or Commissioners. Each time, I have to explain that the reason they didn't get to vote on the Commissioner's race is because they do not live in that Commissioner district. It is at that point that I hear how unfair it is that they cannot vote for all of the Commissioners. One individual who could not vote for Commissioner District 1 at the 2006 primary election was so mad that he threw down his ballot and sleeve and stomped out of the voting place.

Most of the voters have no idea what Commissioner District they reside in or who the Commissioner is that represents them.

This is the reason why I support allowing all of the citizens to vote on this issue so they can have the final say (one way or the other) as to how they wish to be represented.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Janet R. Rumpel
Sherman County Election Officer

February 8, 2009

Ethics and Elections Committee
Kansas State Legislature

Re: SB171 – Sherman County Commissioner At Large

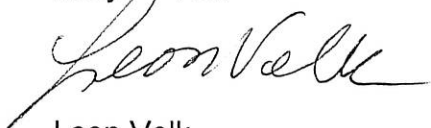
To Whom It May Concern:

As citizens of Sherman County we would like to express our support for SB171 – County Commissioner At-Large. We realize that it takes more than one commissioner to make a decision regarding local issues. We, and our taxes, are affected by all County Commissioners, not just one. Therefore, we feel we should have a voice in electing all County Commissioners. We would ask that you give the citizens a chance to practice their Right to Vote on this issue for Sherman County.

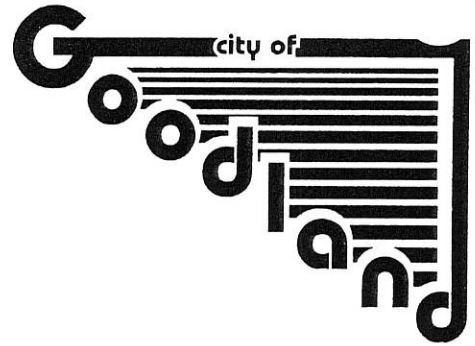
Sincerely,



Mary P. Volk



Leon Volk



February 6, 2009

Ethics and Elections Committee
Legislature of the State of Kansas

In re: Senate Bill No. 171-Sherman County Election of County
Commissioners

To Whom It May Concern:

The Commissioners of the City of Goodland would like to express our support for Senate Bill No. 171 to permit the At-Large/At-Large Voting for County Commissioner in Sherman County. We feel this to be a great benefit for the residents of Sherman County.

Sincerely,



Rick Billinger
Mayor



Joshua Dechant
Vice Mayor



Annette Fairbanks
City Commissioner



Dave Daniels
City Commissioner



Jonn Garcia
City Commissioner

204 West 11th
P.O. Box 59

Goodland, Kansas 67735-0059

(785) 890-4500

February 10, 2009

Ethics and Elections Committee
Kansas State Legislature

Re: SB171 – Sherman County Commissioner At Large

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing asking for your vote in favor of SB171 allowing our people of Sherman County to vote on our commissioners at large.

A committee called "Shine On Sherman County" took a straw poll the day of the General Election on this very subject as many voters asked it for. The results were 333 for and 86 against.

Again, I ask you to vote in favor on SB171.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelby Miller".

Shelby Miller

To ETHICS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Jan. 10, 19

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBERS,

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO SUPPORT
SENATE BILL # 171. TO ALLOW THE
CITIZENS OF SHERMAN COUNTY, TO ALLOW US
TO VOTE ON IF WE WANT OUR COMMISSIONERS
ELECTED AT LARGE, AT LARGE

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR
CONSIDERATION,

Larry Enfield

Jane E. Enfield
AKA (Priscilla)

Ron Weiss

from our viewpoint...

Representation bigger than districts

Recent letters voicing opposition to allowing the citizens to decide on the issue of at-large voting have indicated that without the districts those outside the city would not be represented.

The existing commissioner districts split the city of Goodland into three parts. No one living outside the city can win a county commission seat without winning the votes from that portion of the city.

As one writer pointed out at least 70 percent of the county residents live in the city. Included in that number are a good percentage of farmers who live in the city.

Historically other levels of government within the county had districts, but over the years these were changed to at-large. Specifically the city of Goodland and the Goodland School District were drawn up with wards and districts, but over the years voters agreed to elect those people at-large.

To preserve representation for those who live in the country it would be necessary to draw a district that surrounded the city. That is not practical, and even then the population of all the area outside the city would not be enough under the state laws to balance the districts by population without pulling in a part of the city.

In more than 100 years the loss of population from the rural areas has changed the political landscape especially in the western part of the state.

The courts have tried to define how a district should be defined:

"A district that is reasonably compact and regular, taking into account traditional districting principles such as maintaining communities of interest and traditional boundaries, may pass strict scrutiny," the U.S. Supreme Court ruled after the One-Man One-Vote decision in the 60s.

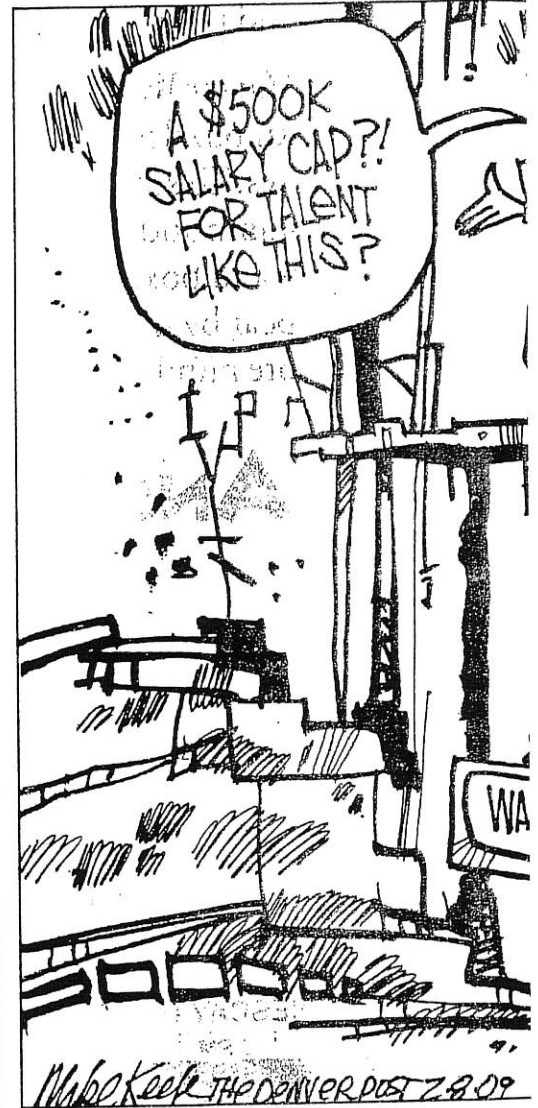
City and county boundaries, although often referred to by the courts as "traditional boundaries" are, at least at times, political boundaries, subject to change through the political process such as annexation.

Goodland would be a traditional boundary under the court definition and if strictly followed the city could be two separate county commission districts leaving the rest of the outlying area to fend for itself as the third district.

That has not historically been the way the districts have been drawn, and Sherman County has been lucky there is no "large" ethnic minority to be included in the districting mapping. That could change, and leave the county trying to create a district to "represent" a minority.

We really feel the at-large voting is better for the whole county, but as much as we believe that the most important point is allowing the citizens of Sherman County to make a decision through the ballot box.

Arguments can and should be made on both sides of the issue. We feel those debates will be held in the near future once we know if the voters are going to have the opportunity to decide the issue. — Tom Betz



Hard to bal

I have been getting inundated with e-mails pleading with me not to make budget cuts.

Whether it is education, social services, public safety or otherwise, the message is the same. When I invited recipients of State money to suggest where cuts should come from if not their budget. The universal answer is "I don't know, just don't cut me."

The deficit is real. Barely skating by this year doesn't help us much in the next two or three years.

We simply must get to the point where expenditures match revenue. While it may appear to be politically "safe" simply voting against cuts, or voting for reduced cuts, to do so is fiscally irresponsible in both the long and short run and does not address our requirement to balance the budget and remain in the black.

Having said that, our House accommodation (SB 23) to education K-12 (for which I voted)

4-7

January 6, 2009

Sherman County Commissioners
813 Broadway
Goodland, KS 67735

Goodland Commissioners
204 West 11th St
Goodland, KS 67735

Dear Commissioners,

In response to the request of the Sherman County Commissioners in May, 2008, the Government Services Alliance Committee has established 3 public forums to gain citizen feedback pertaining to the issue of allowing the citizens to vote on a desired format for County Commissioner structure.

The first forum was held at 6:30 p.m. on August 4, 2008 at the Northwest Kansas Fair. A public question and answer period was held in conjunction with the hot dog feed. Throughout the week of the fair, August 4 – August 8, a booth containing survey questionnaires was also available to the public for comment and response. During the public meeting, several proponents of both sides expressed their viewpoints on the issue. The survey question which read

“DO YOU, AS THE VOTERS OF SHERMAN COUNTY, SUPPORT THE POSITION THAT THE VOTERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE AT-LARGE/DISTRICT VOTING FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER?”

YES, I support the request to the State Legislature to allow the voters of Sherman County to determine the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue through the voting process.

NO, I believe the State Statute should not be changed to allow the citizens of Sherman County to vote on the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue.”

was answered by 87 respondents. The tallies were as follows: 58 YES (67%), 21 NO (24%), 8 unsigned (7 yes and 1 no) (9%).

The second forum was held on November 4, 2008, from 7 am to 7 pm at the Goodland Activities Center. This time and day were set to mirror the general election. The ballot question at that time read

DO YOU, AS THE VOTERS OF SHERMAN COUNTY, SUPPORT THE POSITION THAT THE VOTERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE AT-LARGE/DISTRICT VOTING FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER?

YES, I support the request to the State Legislature to allow the voters of Sherman County to determine the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue through the voting process.

NO, I believe the State Statute should not be changed to allow the citizens of Sherman County to vote on the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue.

There were 419 ballots cast, 333 YES (80%) and 86 NO (20%). Between the two forums, there was a documented 2.5% and 12.2% response from registered voters in the county.

The third forum was held on December 2, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Goodland Elks Lodge. Our guests for the evening were several representatives who assisted in developing the newly formed Greeley County. The forum provided insight into steps that the City of Tribune and Greeley County took to evaluate the direction the citizens wanted their city and county to go. We feel that there was a wonderful question and answer segment that allowed any and all questions to be asked of the panel. We had each attendee complete a survey question that asked two questions and read

1. DO YOU SUPPORT THE POSITION THAT THE VOTERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE AT-LARGE/DISTRICT VOTING FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER?

YES, I support the request to the State Legislature to allow the voters of Sherman County to determine the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue through the voting process.

NO, I believe the State Statute should not be changed to allow the citizens of Sherman County to vote on the County Commissioner At-Large/District Issue.

2. IF YOU SUPPORT A CHANGE IN OUR COUNTY COMMISSIONER STRUCTURE, WHICH FORMAT MOST CLOSELY REPRESENTS THE STRUCTURE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE?

A. 3 County Commissioner positions from 3 Districts, voted on by the entire County. (Commissioner must live in the District, but all voters vote on all Commissioners)

B. 3 County Commissioner positions, no Districts, voted on by the entire County. (Districts would go away, Commissioners can come from anywhere, all voters vote on all Commissioners)

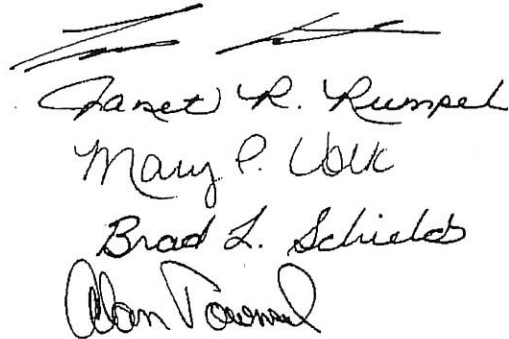
C. 5 County Commissioner positions, 3 from Districts, 2 At-Large, voted on by the entire County. (3 Existing Districts with one Commissioner living in each District, 2 Commissioners from anywhere in the county, all voted by all voters)

We had 31 respondents to this survey. The tallies for the first question were as follows: 26 YES (84%) and 5 NO (16%). The tallies for the second question were as follows: 2 for choice A (7%), 8 for choice B (30%) and 17 for choice C (63%). (The reason for the discrepancy in the numbers is because there was one YES that didn't check A, B or C and two NO's that marked C.)

In closing, we feel the committee has gathered the information that the commissioner's have requested in the spring and feel the results provide you with a road map of the feeling of the citizens of Sherman County. Further meetings may be established to determine the exact structure of the proposal.

Respectfully,

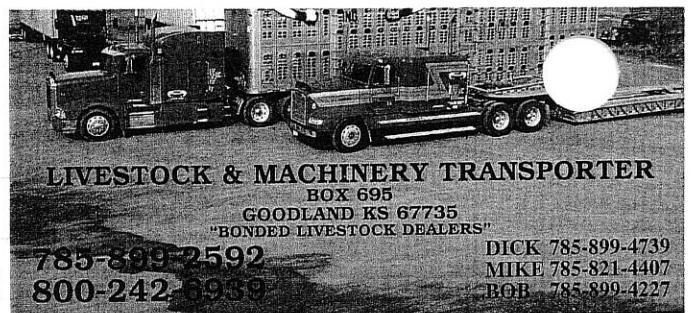
Government Service Alliance Committee



Janet R. Rumpel
Mary P. Volk
Brad L. Schieleb
Don [unclear]

cc:
Elections & Governmental Organization Committee
Local Government Committee

2-10-2009



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I AM WRITING THE LETTER TO SUPPORT
SENATE BILL # 171.

I AM A LIFE LONG RESIDENT OF
SHERMAN COUNTY. I AM A BUSINESS MAN
BEING PRESIDENT OF START + SON INC (A
LIVESTOCK TRUCKING BUSINESS IN OUR 75TH YEAR)
AND PRESIDENT OF CENTURY FEEDERS INC (A 10,000
HEAD CAPACITY FEEDLOT).

I AM ALSO A USD #352 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER.
WHEN IST ELECTED I WAS THE AT LARGE
ELECTED MEMBER. WE AS A BOARD WANTED
ALL MEMBERS TO BE ELECTED BY ALL OF THE
VOTERS. THIS WAS DONE BY A BOARD WANTING
TO BE ELECTED BY ALL AND WANTING TO REPRESENT
ALL - NOT JUST OUR AREA!

THE PROCESS HAS BEEN A BLESSING! THE VOTERS
HAVE A CHOICE TO ELECT AND VOTE FOR EVERY
CANDIDATE! IT HAS WORKED FOR THE SCHOOL
BOARD FOR OVER 20 YEARS AND STILL WORK
FOR OUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS! ONLY THOSE WITH
A SELFISH HIDDEN AGENDA WOULD NOT BE IN
FAVOR!

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS BILL TO ALLOW ALL
CITIZENS TO BE A POSITIVE FORCE IN THE
SELECTION OF ALL COMMISSIONERS!

WE IN SHERMAN COUNTY WANT THE BEST
FOR EVERY CITIZEN!

Sincerely

Dick Short

408 W 9th Goodland, KS 4-10

Vignery & Mason L.L.C.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

214 E. 10TH STREET, BOX 767
GOODLAND, KANSAS 67735
TEL. (785) 890-6588 FAX (785) 890-7506

J. RONALD VIGNERY
JEFFERY A. MASON

LESLIE BEIMS

February 10, 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing to express my support of the passage of Senate Bill 171. The citizens of Sherman County have spent the past year attempting to rectify the injustice of last legislative session's failure to pass this legislation. The vast majority of residents of Sherman County favor being allowed to vote on the issue of at large election of County Commissioners. Whether individuals are in favor of this concept or not, they should be allowed to express that opinion at the ballot box. Meetings have been held. Straw polls have been conducted. The citizens of our County want to vote on this issue. Please pass Senate Bill 171.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jeffery A. Mason
of VIGNERY & MASON L.L.C.

JAM/jm

Feb 10, 2009

The Honorable Senator Dr Roger Reitz and Committee Members

I would like to encourage you to vote favorably for passage of SB171, giving Sherman County residents the opportunity to vote for commissioners at large at large. We are a very small county and it is rare that anyone running for office has not been at least heard of by a majority of the county. I hear frequently that people are frustrated when they cannot run for the position, or vote for whoever is running, because of an invisible line.

We have worked for 2 years and now are into the third legislative session to get this issue to a vote by the entire county. As a new commissioner, I have been asked over and over again how soon we can vote for all the commissioners and who can run for office.

My campaign materials all indicated my support for legislative approval on this issue. I defeated my two term opponent by an almost 70-30% margin. The main comment made to me was that I believed that we should have the privilege of determining how we elect our commissioners. I believe that the representation will be greater for the population because more people will run for office those elected will have a greater need to represent everyone in the county in a responsible manner.

The main school district in our county (Goodland) has voting at large for school board. The makeup of the board has always been almost half and half (town and country) and is currently made of a majority of members that reside out of town.

I thank you for addressing this issue and again would ask that you vote favorably for our request to vote on the issue of at large at large.

Sincerely



Cynthia Strnad

Sherman County citizen, voter, and County Commissioner

To whom it may concern:

We support the passage of Senate Bill #171 for this time in our county. We are a small county and most people know everyone within the county and this gives all residents the privilege to vote on all the commissioners. This bill increases our representation.

Virginia Palmgren
Kenneth Palmgren

2-11-09

To Whom It May Concern:

It is our feeling that at large voting for Sherman County is what is best for our area. As is allowing residents to vote on this issue.

Our changing population makes districts out of date.

Please consider this when deciding on Ballot # 171.

Thank You

Shirley A. Gray

Richard A. Pittman

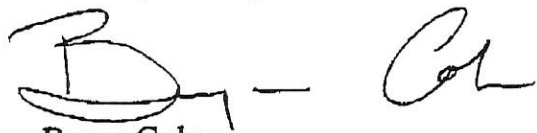
P.O. Box 164

Goodland, KS 67735

To Whom it May Concern:

I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 171 – at large voting in Sherman County.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryce Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and "C".

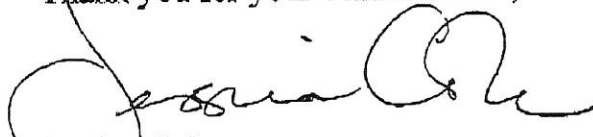
Bryce Cole
Sherman County resident

Feb 10, 2009

To Whom it May Concern:

I write this letter in support of Senate Bill 171 – at large voting in Sherman County.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jessica Cole
Sherman County resident

Feb. 10, 2009

February 11, 2009

To: Ethics & Elections Committee

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Kevin Rasure and I have served as a county commissioner for 8 years, my term ended January of this year. The issue of at-large districts has been discussed in Sherman County over the last 3 years. Sherman County has one school district with all board members voted on at-large and the city commission has no districts with voting at-large. Sherman County has only one major population center that being Goodland and the districts are divided in a pie shape with each district getting approximately 1/3 of the City of Goodland. During a candidate forum 2 ½ years ago all candidates were in favor of at large voting, including a current commissioner that has not supported that statement to the legislators even after signing a letter of support which passed unanimously and was signed by the three Sherman County commissioners in March 2007 and again signed in 2008. During discussions about this issue never once have any of the commissioners stated that they only represent their district. We have all stated that we try to do what is the best for Sherman County. I am a retail store owner and because I am very accessible to the public, many residents have discussed county issues with me. I am quite aware that there are people on both sides of this issue, but in my conversations with them (both at the store and other public gatherings), I have gathered that a great majority of them would like to see at-large voting for county commissioners. I feel that opinion is validated by the public votes that the Shine on Sherman County committee provided. Many people, me included, believe that the most important issue is not yes or no on the issue of at-large voting, but the right to let the Sherman County voters make that decision. It is a decision that should not be made by our current county commissioners or the State of Kansas. I would greatly appreciate you letting the voters of Sherman County have the right to choose how their commissioners are elected.

Thank You,

Kevin Rasure
Rasure Lumber Inc

Senate Ethics and Elections Cmte
Date 2-12-2009
Attachment 5