

Jonathan Smith

Opponent testimony for SB 208

A bill prohibiting the use of remote ballot boxes as amended

House Elections Committee Hearing scheduled for March 7th, 2023

Chair Proctor and esteemed members of the House Elections Committee,

Good Afternoon, My name is Jonathan Smith. I have lived and worked in Topeka, Kansas nearly my entire life. I am a husband and a father of two children. My passion is politics and I strive to get as many of my family and friends involved in as many elections as I can.

SB 208 originally started as an unfunded and more appropriately *unfounded* measure to try and make people *feel* as though Kansas elections were more secure and less fraud-stricken. This belief has not been found to bear any facts in reality. Kansas elections are sound and strong. The audits that have already taken place in Kansas found little to no voting irregularities. The irregularities that they *did* find, tended to be in the single digits, and were usually just clerical errors. These are regular occurrences across the country and do not merit these fraudulent claims of widespread election or voter fraud.

You can ask the current **Secretary of State Scott Schwab**'s opinion yourselves, he posted as much in his **Opponent testimony** to the Senate Fed and State Affairs committee on February 20th, 2023. I will save you the time by quoting him here:

“Our office looks forward to working with the legislature to ensure ballot drop boxes remain a secure method for voters to return their advance by mail ballot and provide county election officials with the support and resources necessary to continue administering safe and secure elections.”

If our own Republican Secretary of State's opinion isn't enough to change your mind on the matter, let's take a moment to see what the real world ramifications of passing this bill would be on actual voting Kansans. Here is the **Director of Policy and Outreach at the Disability Rights Center of Kansas**, and what he has to say about the effects of SB 208:

“Some people with disabilities must have the night supports to keep them alive due to complications caused by their disability. These Kansans with disabilities, including veterans of military service, would not be able to return their ballot to the box under this proposal.”

This means that injured veterans from our military who have a *need* for support at night, which would make them unavailable for support during the day would have no way to deliver their ballot to an election office. In addition to the possible passing of SB 209 making mail-in voting *additionally* more difficult and less trustworthy, these honorable servicemen will be disenfranchised for the sake of farcical election security.

With my last and arguably most important testimony to highlight, I provide you a quote from the **Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Associations**:

“We believe that drop boxes for depositing advance ballots are an important tool for voters to ensure that their ballots are received by the election office. With delivery delays by the US Postal Service expected to continue, we believe that allowing ballots to be deposited in a secure drop box prior to the close of polls on Election Day is a good option for voters to return their ballots. County election offices should be allowed to place and utilize drop boxes appropriately for their jurisdiction following guidelines established by the Secretary of State”

This bill seems to be an attempt to convince voters to be trustworthy of the security of Kansas elections. This bill does not do this. This bill needlessly disenfranchises legal Kansas voters based off of *baseless* election lies and conspiracies. You can ask your own Secretary of State, he knows that Kansas has safe elections. He even testified to that fact. A more appropriate and tactful use of the legislature's time would be to mandate accurate communications on behalf of the *true* facts behind our elections: that they are safe and secure.

I ***strongly urge you to please oppose SB 208***. Our elections and voters depend on it.

Thank you for your time Chair Proctor and members of the House Elections Committee.