

2.17.23

SB208

Opponent Testimony, written only

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Private Citizen, Topekan

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to read my testimony here today. I strongly urge you to vote no in opposition of SB 208.

I am a Topekan and a student living in HD 55 and SD 19. I believe that the passage of this bill would severely limit access to the ballot box for thousands of young, working class, and busy Kansans.

Drop boxes have posed no threat to our communities in recent elections or ever on any scale worth noting. Short of nonexistent, concrete, proof of massive voter fraud, working bills such as this is simply a distraction from the honest conversations of the day. Or in other words, to borrow a phrase from all of you, "this is a solution in search of a problem".

The way that this bill limits drop boxes to only existing inside of election offices, during business hours, is a roundabout way of getting rid of drop boxes altogether. The purpose of a drop box is to accommodate folks who live in rural counties far from the election office or working-class Kansans who work night shifts, students who are working hard in class all day and need to be able to vote after hours. Voting by drop box is easiest for young parents who may have difficulty corralling toddlers into the election office and benefit from having a secure drop box they can just drive right up to.

If you ask Kansans to come all the way to the election office and park and come inside during business hours, then the only folks that will be able to do that will be the folks that were already going to come into the office to vote in the booth. You have cut off all the folks at the margins and made drop boxes redundant, but surely most of y'all already know that, because it saddens me to see and think that to this legislature, that may be a feature, not a bug.

Every bill debated is an opportunity cost.

If this body claims to believe in putting Kansas first or in home rule, then I ask that you oppose this bill. The people of Kansas already have already voted for Secretary of State, for their local county clerks, have volunteered their time as poll workers, and kept engaged at every level in between. We need to stop talking about elections as something that happen *to us*, and take some responsibility in the fact that *we the people* put on our elections together. Rarely do claims of fraud actually get lobbed directly at the Secretary of State, they just roll in as a dark fog with no purpose or direction. It just leads to confusion and that confusion breeds anger and apathy. Some days it is hard to tell which is worse.

Our elections are safe. Limiting the number of drop boxes just sends a message that you, agents of the government, do not yourselves believe in your peers, the government. Yes, I understand that there will always be a diversity of opinions and priorities among agencies and branches, but

it seems to me that if you don't have proof of need, you are really only insulting other hard-working Kansans working in elections, insulting their intentions and hearts or insulting their intelligence and competency to run safe and fair elections.

If you want to be on the same team with election workers up and down the chain of command, then recognize that elections are already expensive, these hard-working folks are already stretched to capacity, and this air of suspicion around elections is only making it harder for them to recruit strong talent.

Additionally, as a recent first-time poll worker, I know that I was not allowed to vote the day of. I had to vote early both in August and November. Election offices are already struggling to recruit a younger work force of poll workers, limiting their options to vote early in a safe and convenient way may cause would-be poll workers to decide not to apply so that they can focus on getting their own vote counted and then we would all be poorer for it. When I hear that bills like this are just about "personal responsibility" to get your vote in on time, I wonder, what is a better display of personal and *community* responsibility than wanting to be a poll worker?

Thank you again for your time, please vote against SB 208 and protect the voter accessibility for working class and busy Kansans.