

Written Testimony

Date: January 30, 2024

Bill Number: SB 368

Name of Conferee: Jean C. Owen

Self or Organization: Self

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Senate Committee on
Federal & State Affairs

I am a retired attorney, having previously practiced law in Johnson County, Kansas for 49 plus years. I am registered as an unaffiliated voter and offer this testimony as such.

I am **opposed** to this bill for the following reasons:

- There is no compelling reason to pass legislation, such as SB 368, that restricts voting methods.
- Many elections result in candidates being elected without attaining a majority of the popular votes that are cast, such as in the last 3 Kansas gubernatorial elections. In said elections, although there were more than two candidates running, the overwhelming number of votes were cast for either the Republican or Democrat candidate.
- It is common knowledge that in the current political environment many potential voters are dissatisfied with the partisan aspect of the electoral process. This is evidenced by the fact, that in the last race for Kansas governor, the voter turnout was only 47.9% of the eligible voters (Ballotpedia, retrieved July 25, 2022). Rather than vote for one of two major party candidates, neither of whom

they chose to support, an obviously high the percentage of the eligible voters simply opted not to vote.

- Unlike the current electoral process, “ranked choice voting” (hereinafter referred to as “RCV”) generally results in a candidate achieving the support of the majority of the votes cast. RCV requires the winning candidate to receive over 50% of the eligible votes cast in the final round. See Research and Data on RCV In Practice at *fairvote.org*.
- RCV encourages broader participation by eligible voters for the reason that they can vote without fear of having their ballot result in the election of a candidate that they do not desire to support.
- RCV is a non-partisan method that promotes bipartisan cooperation between political parties, generally resulting in more productive legislation action. It has been implemented successfully in Alaska, Maine, Minneapolis (MN), New York City, Utah (municipalities) and by Virginia Republicans.
- RCV is in the best interests of the country, as it encourages candidates that are not affiliated with major political parties to run for office, thereby expanding the marketplace of ideas that should be considered by our elected officials.

I thank the Committee for its consideration of the testimony hereinbefore set out.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean C. Owen, JD