

February 5, 2024

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

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BILL NUMBER: **SB365, *Requiring all advance voting ballots be returned by 7:00 p.m. on election day.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Chair Thompson & Members of the Committee,

I truly value my American citizenship. I have been honored to vote in almost every election, local, state, and national since I turned eighteen. Today, when I cast my vote by mail-in ballot before Election Day or even up to the close of business at the post office on Election Day itself, my postmarked ballot has up to three days *after* the election to travel to the election office and reach the clerks' hands. To be clear: the sustained, systematic degradation of postal services during the Trump Administration and ongoing labor shortages at the USPS today already threaten that grace period enacted during the pandemic.

SB365, Chair Thompson — YOUR bill — further degrades democracy in Kansas by throttling the commonsense fix your predecessors made and ***requires mailed ballots be thrown out*** if they fail to reach county election offices by 7:00pm Election Day, I reiterate, this is not because the law-abiding, verifiable Kansas citizen did anything nefarious or illegal, rather the United States Postal Service was at fault!

Let's get down to brass tacks:

- Advanced voting in Kansas is safe, secure, and has been in use here for decades;
- 4 in 10 Kansans voted by advanced ballot in 2022, almost as many — 1 in 3 Kansans — voted by mail in 2020;
- Restricting mail-in voting threatens citizens' ability to vote, burdening rural folks, shift workers, the elderly, and the disabled. Why?
- The 3-day grace period has broad, bipartisan support.
- This kind of "election interference" risks making election administration even more taxing — at a time when we are seeing record number of clerks and election workers leave this kind of work for less stressful and threatened work.

My vision of a strong, democratic Kansas is one that preserves and defends the rights of every citizen to have their vote counted and their voice heard — every election. There is clearly no other vote for this committee to take but "No!"



Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7