

2/5/2024

SB 365

Written Only

Opponent

Chloe Chaffin

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Private Citizen

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 365 with you today. My name is Chloe Chaffin and I am a voter in Shawnee County. I am writing today to ask the committee to vote no on SB365.

I turned 18 in May of 2020, very near to the start of the pandemic lockdown. My grandpa was an American history and civics professor and I was an active debater at school. I had looked forward to voting for the first time for so many years and was excited that I turned 18 in a presidential election year. Of course, COVID complicated things. I ended up voting by mail because I loved many members of my family and community who were immunocompromised or immunosuppressed, my grandpa included. He had recently undergone treatment for colon cancer and I wanted to protect him, so I voted by mail.

That fall I also moved to Topeka to attend Washburn away from my native Johnson County, but for the first couple of years of college, I remained an Olathe voter, registered at my parent's address. Because I am so busy with class and campus leadership positions, it made sense to continue to vote by mail.

Halfway through college, I switched my registration to reflect my campus address because I wanted to be a poll worker here in Shawnee County. Again, I attribute much of this passion to my grandpa and the fact that I was continuously seeing in the news that poll worker retention was plummeting. I want to be someone who steps up when I see a need and I wanted to learn more about our elections so I decided to apply, and I have worked on election day every election since.

As a poll worker, I must vote early so that I can be available to check in and assist voters when we get busy. I must have the ability to vote in advance, and feel confident in that voting method, so that I may be freed up to assist our elections offices in other ways. Poll worker recruitment is already down in most places, let us not make this more difficult by casting more doubt on our elections process. I fear that eliminating the grace period would make folks less confident in voting by mail, even when

that is the fault of the post office and not the voters themselves, and therefore they will be less likely to agree to be poll workers. It may also hurt poll worker retention as when the general public feels less confident in voting by mail, lines will be longer and the days more stressful at polling sites in person on the day of.

I know I am not alone in this. Most folks who prefer to vote in advance do so for a particular reason, because they are busy. Their reasoning may be different than mine, because of work or small children or because they are a caretaker for aging or ailing loved ones. Life is complicated enough. There is no reason to add to this stress by making major changes to elections in another presidential year when the media environment will be confusing enough and tensions heightened.

No widespread fraud conspiracy has been uncovered in the vote by mail system. To suggest as much is to cast doubt on our fellow Kansans serving in our county elections office when their jobs have been made hard enough the past few years.

Again, thank you for taking the time to listen. Please acknowledge the safety and security of our elections and vote no in opposition of SB 365.