

HB2018 Written-only Opponent Testimony

Chairman Proctor and Members of the Committee,

In case you're wondering, yes, I did submit proponent testimony on this bill last year. However, after giving it more thought, I've changed my position.

While I understand the concern about the majority of poll workers being 61 and older—and no offense to the military—I believe there are better options than bringing in military personnel or their families to serve as poll workers.

Some might see this as giving preferential treatment to military members, which could raise concerns about favoritism or even the perception of military influence in a civilian election process. Maintaining an election system staffed entirely by community members not only strengthens trust but also reinforces the idea that elections are free from any external interference.

Local voters and residents who meet poll worker eligibility requirements might feel like their opportunities are being overlooked in favor of non-local individuals. This could undermine the community-driven nature of elections, which is so vital to maintaining public confidence.

Instead of relying on non-residents, we should focus on outreach and recruitment efforts aimed at potential local poll workers. This approach would keep elections rooted in the community, encourage local engagement, and ensure a more representative process.

Safeguarding local control of elections is critical to maintaining their integrity and the trust they inspire. Exceptions to this principle, even if well-intentioned, can set a dangerous precedent. For example:

- Temporary residents, such as college students, might also start arguing for similar opportunities.
- In more extreme cases, jurisdictions could consider outsourcing poll worker duties to contractors or workers from other states during emergencies, which would dilute local accountability.

These shifts blur the line between elections as a local responsibility and something more centralized or external—a trend we should avoid.

Rather than allowing non-residents to work the polls, I encourage the committee to explore solutions that prioritize local engagement and strengthen our community-driven election process. For these reasons, I respectfully ask the members of the committee to vote against passage of this bill.

Kari Sue Vosburgh
Sedgwick County Precinct Committeewoman