

## Testimony in Support of HB2018: Relating to Military Families to Serve as Poll Workers

Thank you, Chairman Proctor and Members of the Committee.

I'm here today as a proponent for HB2018 with the hopes that it can provide support to our hardworking election commissioners and clerks in their poll worker recruitment efforts, along with providing a way to welcome the military families in our community.

In the 2018 general election, around six in ten U.S. poll workers (58%) were ages 61 and older, including roughly a quarter (27%) over 70, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of government data.

The United States Election Assistance Commission's survey data shows nearly 65% of jurisdictions reported that it was "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult" to obtain enough poll workers to staff polling locations. For more populous areas, that difficulty increased to 88%.

For this reason, it makes sense that we might consider a targeted effort to include military families to serve as poll workers, even if their voter registration or residency might differ from where they currently reside.

Military spouses are an integral part of our armed forces community. Due to frequent relocations, they often face unique challenges and sacrifices in their personal and professional lives. Recent data shows that families are being uprooted on average every two to four years. The Institute for Veterans and Military Families survey showed that 72% of active-duty personnel and their spouses required an absentee ballot because they were not registered to vote in the same place they resided. By allowing military family members to serve as poll workers, we can provide them with a valuable opportunity to contribute to their local communities while also supporting the democratic principles that our armed forces protect.

By allowing military families to serve as poll workers, we can address our state's pressing issue of poll worker shortages. These individuals' participation will help ensure the smooth operation of polling stations, reduce waiting times, and enhance the overall efficiency of the electoral process.

I want to emphasize that these groups are highly motivated and capable individuals who bring unique perspectives and skills to the role of poll workers. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences will enrich the electoral process and our representative democracy.

Let me end by saying that this modification to the current law should not negate any other safeguards that we currently have in place to ensure that our elections are secure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to propose this bill for consideration.

Kim Borchers Shawnee County