

Legislative Testimony

In **Opposition** to HB2021
House Committee on Elections
January 30, 2025

IN PERSON

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Rashane Hamby. I am the Policy Director for the ACLU of Kansas. We are a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that works to preserve and strengthen the civil rights and liberties of every person in Kansas.

The ACLU of Kansas is committed to defending the right to vote and upholding secure, accessible means of voting for all. As such, we are deeply concerned about the many election-related bills introduced this session that limit the accessibility of voting for Kansans or tampers with a well-functioning electoral system because of unsubstantiated concerns about the integrity of our elections. There is not now, nor has there ever been, any legitimate reason to intensify control over the use of ballot boxes in Kansas. Though not explicitly stated, a potential outcome of HB 2021 is the creation of regulations that will undermine the principles we are the ACLU are trying to uphold, and will curtail the right to vote of Kansas citizens. Because of this, we oppose HB 2021.

We value local control of elections, within established law, for a very important reason: what works in one county will not always, or even often, work in another (1).

Ballot drop boxes are a safe, accessible way for citizens to cast their vote. They provide much needed flexibility to voters in our busy modern world. These drop boxes are not only safe and secure, they are **necessary** to ensure voters are able to participate in our elections. Amber McReynolds, a national election administration expert and former election official from Denver, said that drop boxes benefit people of all political persuasions (2).

This body should not be in the business of making voting harder for Kansans. Limiting safe, accessible avenues for ballot return is an attack on voting rights and is an absolutely unnecessary interference of this body into the work of local election professionals.

This bill is a better alternative than a mandate from the state. Legislators attempting to make rules for the entire state about placement of drop boxes is ill advised at best. Each county is different and clerks should have the freedom to make decisions about the placement of ballot drop boxes that best fits the needs of voter in their county. Bills from previous sessions have sought to eliminate the use of drop boxes entirely, a blatant attack on the right of the people to have their ballots cast in good faith counted on election day. Attempts by the legislature to ban or limit the use of drop boxes, or directly dictate where drop boxes can be located, are a squeeze on the voter's ability to cast their ballot with ease.

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This bill lacks guarantees that ballot boxes will be in accessible areas for the elderly, the disabled, and those who are simply busy with life and parenthood and need to drop off their ballots as quickly as possible. Many people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs or have difficulty walking, find drop boxes are essential to casting their ballots. They can drive or walk directly to the drop box and deposit their ballot (3). This bill lacks and guarantee that drop boxes will be placed in locations that are easily accessible to citizens with disabilities and mobility issues.

For those reasons, I urge you to vote no on HB2021.

I will now stand for questions.

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