

02/05/2025

HB2023

Opponent

Written Only

Chairman Proctor and Members of the committee,

I am submitting my opponent testimony for HB2023. Since the presidential election of 2020, politics and elections have become contentious subjects. A lot of events played out on television and in the news concerning elections. Instances such as stuffing ballot boxes, continuing to count ballots day after day after day, machine fraud, etc. Despite what your personal experiences are with those activities, it did ignite a fire in the public to want answers about all aspects of elections. Open records requests increased, public meetings were widely attended, phone calls were made. People questioned the county clerks and election commissioners, drop boxes were monitored, machines were scrutinized, and more people volunteered to be poll workers.

With that said, the increase in attention and search for answers caused tension between the election offices and the public. I personally questioned my election commissioner and election office as much as needed to get sufficient answers. It was respectful, but I know it irritated her and she wanted me to go away. But, as a member of the public I have that right. Every member of the public has a right to question any level and department of government. The First Amendment of the US Constitution gives the public the right for redress of grievances.

The reason I oppose HB2023 is the fact I believe this bill is an attempt to push people away from being able to redress their grievances. The way this bill is written paints a broad brush and leaves terms to be interpreted. What exactly is "Interference"? Can questioning an official numerous times be considered interfering? Can it be intimidating? Can it be coercing? Does writing numerous KORA requests impede their ability to perform their official duties? Is it interfering with an election official at a polling location if too many questions are asked? Where is the line on this? This bill is too broad and vague to pass on. Besides, there are already laws on the books about criminal threats and trespassing.

I want to make one more point. Over the past few years watching this committee and writing testimonies, the conferees who have been asking a ton of questions or making comments about our elections have been told we need to talk about relevant problems in Kansas. Not other places, but what happens in Kansas. I'd like to ask, what is the relevant problem in Kansas this bill is trying to fix? When is the last time an election official has been threatened? A police report filed? During Scott Schwab's presentation on 01/16/2025 in this committee, representative Kristi Williams asked how many complaints were filed and how many arrests were made concerning threatening an election official? Scott Schwab did not have an answer. He said he did not have data on that because law enforcement doesn't involve him. So, you're telling me the head election officer in the state of Kansas wouldn't know if there was a police report filed? It sounds suspicious to me. If there is a problem, let's see the facts to back it up.

Again, I believe this bill is a way to suppress the people from redressing their grievances about elections in Kansas. I urge you not to support HB2023.

Respectfully,

Brett Anderson

Republican Precinct Committeeman

Sedgwick County