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TESTIMONY ON SB 309
February 1, 2012
"Stand by Your Ad"

Chairwoman Huntington and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of SB 309. This bill could be called the "Stand by Your Ad" provision and would simply make candidates for state and local offices do what candidates for president and congress already have to do. They would have to let voters know clearly that they are responsible for the advertising content of their ads. Dr. Bob Beatty, Political Science Professor at Washburn University, contacted me about this issue about 18 months ago. Please find attached the content of his written editorials to several newspapers in Kansas that were published last year.

The original idea behind this provision was that candidates might not run such negative ads if they had to clearly associate themselves with their ads. Now there is another reason for this provision. Anonymous groups and individuals have run multiple political TV advertisements. Voters have a difficult time trying to figure out who is behind these advertisements. As such, the issue of credibility is hard to discern. One simple remedy for this problem is to do what several other states have done and adopt the federal political TV advertisements. Groups and individuals will still be able to run advertisements and hide their identities, but with this reform at least voters will know when a candidate is behind the information. As for politicians, they should embrace the reform. A recent academic study showed that advertisements where the candidate has approved the communication had a more positive impact on viewers compared to those that did not, regardless of whether they knew the candidate well.

Thank you for your consideration! I am Vicki Schmidt and I approve the above message, because this small reform can make a big difference in the legitimacy of elections!



OPINION

KANSAS INSIGHT: I'm Bob Beatty and I approved this message[Print Page](#)By **BOB BEATTY**Published:
Monday, January 10, 2011 2:46 PM CST

Political advertisements on television have become a staple of American elections.

Whereas in some countries, such as Great Britain, political TV ads for individual candidates are banned, here in the U.S., election season brings about a veritable cornucopia of TV ads.

Millions of dollars are spent by candidates, political action committees and individuals to promote and attack, exhort and admonish, conflate and condemn.

Why? Because they work.

Voters watch them and are affected by them.

TV ads have been, and will continue to be, a key element in who is elected to our public offices.

And because political TV advertising has become so important to the functioning of our democratic process, it also has become important to make some small changes to Kansas law as it pertains to political advertising.

Two common-sense bills will be introduced in the Kansas Legislature this session and should be passed, in order to help clarify what voters are seeing when the political ad season begins anew.

The first bill — which was a long time coming — could be dubbed the "Jenkins-McKinney-Biggs Bill," because it will ban state public office holders who are running for office to appear in public service (PSA) or public service-type ads 60 days before a primary and general election.

Candidates for federal office already are prohibited from doing that, but at the state level, it's perfectly legal, and during the past few years, several incumbents just haven't been able to resist appearing in ads paid for by their office, or a program affiliated with their office, while simultaneously running for that office.

Then-incumbent state treasurer Lynn Jenkins appeared prominently in ads touting the Learning Quest college savings program while she was running for treasurer in 2006.

Her successor, Dennis McKinney, did the same thing in 2010, and incumbent secretary of state Chris Biggs also showed up in a voting PSA made by his office in the days leading up to the 2010 election.

Incoming treasurer Ron Estes has said, "We need to stop this practice of our state officials campaigning for re-election under the guise of program advertising," a sentiment echoed by incoming secretary of state Kris Kobach and new Gov. Sam Brownback.

The Legislature should work quickly to pass this reform as early as possible in the session.

The second bill is known as the "Stand By Your Ad" provision, and simply would make candidates for state and local offices in Kansas do what candidates for the presidency and Congress already have to do:

Let voters know clearly that they are responsible for the advertising content of their ads.

Considering the amount of ads that were run during the recent Todd Tiahrt-Jerry Moran U.S. Senate Republican primary race, almost everyone in Kansas should be familiar with the phrase they both had to utter:

"I'm Jerry Moran/Todd Tiahrt and I approved this message."

Why make candidates do that?

Well, originally the idea was that candidates might not run such negative ads if they had to associate themselves clearly with their ads.

However, a more important reason has emerged:

With the proliferation of political TV ads run by anonymous groups and individuals, voters find it very difficult to discern who is behind the messages in the ads, and therefore find it difficult to know how much credibility to give to the information conveyed.

One simple remedy for that problem is to do what several other states have done and adopt the federal guidelines for all political TV ads.

Groups and individuals still would be able to run ads and hide their identities, but with such reform, at least Kansas voters would know when a candidate is behind the information.

As for politicians, they should embrace the reform, as well, because a recent academic study showed that advertisements in which the candidate has approved the communication had a more positive impact on viewers compared to those that did not, regardless of whether they knew the candidate well.

I'm Bob Beatty and I approved this message, because with these small reforms, the Kansas Legislature can make a big difference in the legitimacy of our elections.

Bob Beatty is a professor of political science at Washburn University and a political analyst for KSNT-27 News in Topeka.

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Fine-tuning political ads

Insight Kansas

By Bob Beatty

Political television advertisements have become a staple of American elections. Whereas in some countries, like Great Britain, political TV ads for individual candidates are banned, here in the U.S., election season brings about a veritable cornucopia of TV ads. Millions of dollars are spent by candidates, political action committees and individuals to promote and attack, exhort and admonish, conflate and condemn.

Why? Because they work.

Voters watch them and are affected by them. TV ads have, and will continue to be, a key element in who gets elected to our public offices. And because political TV advertising has become so important to the functioning of our democratic process, it has also become important that we make some small changes to Kansas law as it pertains to political advertising.

Two common sense bills will be introduced in the Kansas Legislature this session and should be passed in order to help clarify for voters what they're seeing when the political ad season begins anew.

The first bill – which is a long time in coming – could be dubbed the “Jenkins/McKinney/Biggs Bill” – because it will ban state public office holders who are running for office to appear in public service (PSA) or public service-type ads 60 days before a primary and general election. Candidates for federal office are already prohibited from doing this, but at the state level, it's perfectly legal, and over the past few years, several incumbents just haven't been able to resist appearing in ads paid for by their office or a program affiliated with their office while simultaneously running for that office.

Then-incumbent State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins appeared prominently in ads touting the Learning Quest college savings program while she was running for treasurer in 2006. Her successor, Dennis McKinney, did the same thing in 2010, and incumbent Secretary of State Chris Biggs also showed up in a voting PSA made by his office in the days leading up to the 2010 election.

Incoming Treasurer Ron Estes has said that “we need to stop this practice of our state officials campaigning for re-election under the guise of program advertising,” a sentiment echoed by incoming Secretary of State Kris Kobach and new Gov. Sam Brownback. The Legislature should work quickly to get this reform passed as early as possible in the session.

The second bill is known as the “Stand by Your Ad” provision and would simply make candidates for state and local offices in Kansas do what candidates for president and Congress already have to do: Let voters know clearly that they are responsible for the advertising content of their ads. Considering the amount of ads that were run during the recent Todd Tiahrt-Jerry Moran U.S. Senate Republican primary, almost everyone in Kansas should be familiar with the phrase they both had to utter, “I'm Jerry Moran/I'm Todd Tiahrt and I approve this message.”

Why make candidates do this?

Well, originally the idea was that candidates might not run such negative ads if they had to clearly associate themselves with their ads. However, a more important reason has emerged, and this is, with the proliferation of political TV ads run by anonymous groups and individuals, voters find it very difficult to discern who is behind the messages in the ads and therefore find it difficult to know how much credibility to give the information conveyed.

One simple remedy for to this problem is to do what several other states have done and adopt the federal guidelines for all political TV ads. Groups and individuals will still be able to run ads and hide their identities, but with this reform, at least Kansas voters will know when a candidate is behind the information. As for the politicians, they should embrace the reform as well, because a recent academic study showed that advertisements where the candidate has approved the communication had a more positive impact on viewers compared to those that did not, regardless of whether they knew the candidate well.

I'm Bob Beatty and I approve this message, because with these small reforms the Kansas Legislature can make a big difference in the legitimacy of our elections.

Bob Beatty is a political scientist and political analyst for KSNT-27 News in Topeka.



INSIGHT KANSAS: I approve this message

By **Dr. BOB BEATTY**

The Morning Sun

Posted Jan 11, 2011 @ 08:00 AM

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TOPEKA — Political television advertisements have become a staple of American elections. Whereas in some countries, political TV ads for individual candidates are banned, here in the U.S. election season brings about a veritable flood of TV ads. Millions of dollars are spent by candidates, political action committees, and individuals to promote and attack candidates, admonish, conflate and condemn. Why? Because they work. Voters watch them and are affected by them. TV ads have continued to be, a key element in who gets elected to our public offices. And because political TV advertising has become so important to the functioning of our democratic process, it has also become important that we make some small changes to Kansas law that pertains to political advertising. Two common-sense bills will be introduced in the Kansas legislature this session and are expected to be passed in order to help clarify for voters what they're seeing when the political ad season begins anew.

The first bill — which is a long time in coming — could be dubbed the “Jenkins/McKinney/Biggs Bill” — because it will require office holders who are running for office to appear in public service (PSA) or public service-type ads sixty days before a general election. Candidates for federal office are already prohibited from doing this, but at the state level it's perfectly legal. In the past few years several incumbents just haven't been able to resist appearing in ads paid for by their office or a party. Then-incumbent State Treasurer Lynn Jenkins appeared in ads touting the Learning Quest college savings program while she was running for Treasurer in 2006, her successor, McKinney did the same thing in 2010, and incumbent Secretary of State Chris Biggs also showed up in a voting PSA in the days leading up to the 2010 election. Incoming Treasurer Ron Estes has said that “We need to stop this practice of state officials campaigning for re-election under the guise of program advertising,” a sentiment echoed by incoming Governor Kris Kobach and new Governor Sam Brownback. The legislature should work quick to get this reform passed as early as possible in the session.

The second bill is known as the “Stand by Your Ad” provision and would simply make candidates for state and local office responsible for the advertising content of their ads. Considering the amount of ads that were run during the recent Todd Tiahrt — Jerry Moran/I'm Todd Tiahrt and I approve this message.” Why make candidates do this? Well, originally the idea was that candidates might not run such negative ads if they had to clearly associate themselves with their ads. However, a more important issue has emerged, and this is, with the proliferation of political TV ads run by anonymous groups and individuals, voters find it difficult to discern who is behind the messages in the ads, and therefore find it difficult to know how much credibility to give to the information conveyed. One simple remedy for this problem is to do what several other states have done and adopt the federal “Stand by Your Ad” provision for political TV ads. Groups and individuals will still be able to run ads and hide their identities, but with this reform in place voters will know when a candidate is behind the information. As for the politicians, they should embrace the reform. A recent academic study showed that advertisements where the candidate has approved the communication had a more positive impact on viewers compared to those that did not, regardless of whether they knew the candidate well.

I'm Bob Beatty and I approve this message, because with these small reforms the Kansas Legislature can make a big legitimacy of our elections.

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