

Ethics and Elections Committee Testimony

By Marie D. Johnson

238. S. 10th Str., Salina, Kansas 67401

My name is Marie D. Johnson and I am from Salina, Kansas. I am here as a citizen to represent my neighbors, my daughter, my husband and my community. I would like to start off by saying we are appalled that our beloved state would pass a bill that will disenfranchise many Kansans from voting.

The right to vote is paramount to our democracy. Of the 17 Amendments ratified since the Bill of Rights, more than 7 have been to expand voter eligibility. This Bill does nothing to expand voter eligibility. It is actually designed to limit voter participation. This Bill will negatively affect those who need the protection of the Constitution the most; the elderly, people of color, the disabled, the poor, and students.

Requiring a birth certificate to register basically wipes out registration drives and door to door registration. People don't usually carry their Birth Certificates on them and the registrars don't wear copy machines on their backs to make photo copy of Birth Certificates.

Those who support the Bill use the excuse that there is wide spread voter fraud and that supersedes the suppression of potential voters. However voter fraud is non-existent in Kansas. In fact you are more likely to be hit by lightning twice in the same day than commit voter fraud in Kansas.

Therefore, this Voter ID Bill leads me to believe it is not meant to stop voter fraud. It is actually meant to circumvent the constitution and suppress the vote

As a United States Army Veteran I find it deplorable that we have soldiers sacrificing their lives for us, yet their mothers, fathers, uncles, cousins, neighbors, adult children will be restricted from voting. This Bill makes it harder for them to participate in our Democracy, the Democracy that our soldiers are dying to protect.

We cannot allow Jim Crow to raise it's ugly head again. We cannot go back to poll taxes, or discouraging mass groups of people to participate in the electoral process. We cannot forget the blood, sweat, and tears of those who sacrificed their lives and liberty just so the rest of us could vote. From the Women Suffrage movement, to the Civil Rights movement, to Cesar Chavez, people have fought for equality and we cannot allow their victories to die.

To silent a segment of our population is to go against everything the Constitution stands for. I believe it is un-American to fix the electoral system for the sole sake of political gain.

May I want remind you that you work for the people of Kansas. You work for those soldiers and their families. You took oaths to represent all Kansans and not just the Kansans that vote for you.

Senators, you have a chance to stand up for what is right. You have a chance to make a difference in every Kansan's life, you have the chance to tell the World that Kansas respects the individuals right so much that you are willing to go against your Parties agenda and take the bold step of not approving this Bill.

If you stop this Bill from proceeding you will go down in History as heroes because you stood up for the Common Man. You stood up for the Constitution. You took your duties so serious that representing all Kansans was your top priority.

You can show the World that you truly believe and embrace the Constitution will All it's Amendments. Even the ones you don't like.

I beg you Senators, please do the right thing. Don't just do what's right for you. Do what's right for the citizens of Kansas.