

**Testimony on House Bill 2437
Terry Forsyth, Chairman
Working Kansas Alliance**

The Working Kansas Alliance opposes House Bill 2437. Moving up the date for the implementation of these aspects of the Voter Registration statutes will cause confusion among voters and goes beyond simply discouraging citizens from participating in our Democracy. In fact it will outright disenfranchise many Kansans.

The provisions awaiting voters in 2013 are unnecessarily burdensome. It is not a secret that many Kansans do not have a birth certificate or passport. Others have alerted this Legislature to the fact that obtaining the necessary documents to update names in the case of marriage certificates or out-of-state documents in the case of prospective voters born in a state other than Kansas. The barriers to voting in Kansas will cost some voters money, and unfortunately those barriers are already in statute.

The legislation before you today is a blatant attempt to rush those harmful provisions into law in an election year - weeks before a Primary election - and throw up roadblocks to participation for Kansans who think that 2012 is the time for them take an active role in their community. Voting is the essence of civic engagement, and these provisions deliberately undermine that calling.

When and if the proof of citizenship requirement is enacted, the Legislature should spare no expense in seeing that a massive public education campaign is undertaken to inform voters of the changes. A \$300,000 campaign is a paltry sum considering what is at stake with this legislation. In 2010, Missouri estimated it would cost \$16.9 million over three years for TV and radio spots and newspaper advertisements. Even if Kansas dedicated half of that to its effort, that would dwarf what the Secretary of State has proposed.

As it stands, the anti-democratic provisions in House Bill 2437 have already been wisely delayed by the Senate with its work in 2011. County election offices still have plenty of new logistics to adjust to in order to run the 2012 elections with the implementation of the photo ID rules. Adding proof of citizenship at this late hour will cost Kansans their vote. And for those who do attempt to navigate the suddenly altered process of registering and voting, it will cost them financially to acquire the necessary documentation.

House Bill 2437 is anti-democratic, poorly conceived and the plan to implement it and educate voters about the changes is woefully underfunded. It is pure politics, and the worst kind.