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**Mark Desetti, Testimony
House Elections Committee
February 13, 2013
House Bill 2210**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2210.

We know this bill is here because some organizations – notably KNEA – urged Democratic and Unaffiliated voters to switch their party registration to Republican in order to vote in the Republican primary.

We would hope, naturally, that those voters would be more likely to support the Republicans that we supported. You can all see how successful we were with that strategy which is kind of why this bill is so surprising. Those of us who suggested it, lost!

But beyond whether this is a good electoral strategy or not is an underlying question of a citizen's voice in the selection of a legislator.

In many places in Kansas, the only choice in an election is in the Republican primary. And just as often, candidates hold off on filing for election until the filing deadline. They don't want to tip off others that they will be in the race. So in some places in Kansas, if a voter cannot cast a ballot in the Republican primary, the voter has no voice in the selection of their representative.

The real solution to this issue would be to have viable candidates from both parties, and even more than two parties in every race. But the truth is that this bill simply disenfranchises some voters.

One might also say everyone should then just register as Republican. Problem solved. But we all know how meaningful the party label – or the unaffiliated/independent label – can be to many people. I know some Democrats who won't change their affiliation because they refuse to have their voter identification ever list them as Republicans. I know there are Republicans who feel the same way.

The bottom line is that these choices need to be the citizen's choices. There is a need to cut off changes to allow election offices to have accurate records on Election Day. But there is never a reason to deliberately cut off a voter's right to have their vote count.

House Bill 2210 is simply not good public policy.