



THE KANSAS REPUBLICAN PARTY

March 11, 2013

Regarding SB 211 Elections

We present three comments

1 We oppose the elimination of precinct committeeperson elections

Reference: last line of pg 19 & pg 20, and pg 36.

- It appears that the committeeperson position, although only in the form of one person per precinct, continues, but there is no mechanism to elect or otherwise appoint them to the position other than county chair appointments for vacancies.
- The elected position was created in 1908 and, in 1937, committeewoman was added.
- It is important to a healthy party that the foundation party representatives are elected by the members of the Republican party – the voters who chose to affiliate with the party - and not selected by an indirect means.
- Precinct committee people have a vital role in selecting individuals to fill vacancies in elected positions at both state and county level. They should, therefore, be elected directly by the voters.

2. We support moving the election to the Fall

- Turnout in local elections is unacceptably low. As a result, major decisions on taxation, budget, and quality of life are made by elected officials elected by few people and with a dearth of information.
- The spring election, by falling so soon after the fall general election, the holidays, and winter does not provide adequate time for individuals to prepare and campaign for the position.
- When the April date was originally established, there was no need for lead time for candidate filing, advanced ballot mailing, and primary elections. Adding the long chain of preliminary events minimizes a candidate's decision and preparation time.

3. We support partisan elections for the following reasons

- The elections are already partisan in all but name. Both parties recruit their members to run and use them as a bench for future campaigns. Both parties provide support to candidates affiliated with the party. The Republican Party, however, is handicapped because often most candidates are Republican and the party cannot take sides.
- The lack of an institution like a political party to motivate and encourage participation and disseminate information on issues and candidates, serves in effect to disenfranchise hundreds of voters in local elections.
- Partisan designations help voters elect the person who aligns with their philosophy, municipal elections are so low-key most voters don't vote because they know nothing of the candidates.
- The party apparatus such as volunteers and voter data can be used to get the candidate's message out to a broad audience, thereby educating the public on government issues.
- Currently, municipal candidates have small contribution limits and a limited contributor base. The current system allows PACs and special interests to have disproportionate control over county, municipal and school board elections. Party involvement minimizes single issue special interest influence by replacing it with a broad-based organization that does not seek to financially benefit itself at the expense of the general public,
- Political party participation will result in more people involved in the political process which is a benefit to Kansas.



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