



214 SW 6th Street, Suite 300

Topeka, KS 66603

785-235-1307

kent@kab.net

**Neutral on SB 211
Senate Elections Committee
February 21, 2013**

Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Kent Cornish, President/Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters. We represent nearly 280 radio and television stations across the state.

We are neutral on this bill, but I want you to know about a couple of potential impacts on campaigns if all elections are held in the fall of even numbered years. As you are very aware, many candidates for federal, state, and local elections use commercial broadcasting as a means of getting their message out to voters. As you also may be aware, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) only mandates that **federal** candidates be offered "reasonable access" to broadcast air time for elections.

Local broadcasters in Kansas historically have accommodated most, if not all races whether federal, state or local. Yet there is only so much broadcast air time available – particularly in television and larger city radio stations. In a year where there is a U.S. House race, possibly a U.S. Senate race combined with Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner along with state legislative races, commercial air time can get used up rather quickly.

If now you add mayoral, city council and school boards to the mix, there is a possibility some races will not be able to campaign through local broadcasters. Let me emphasize that this is not about dollars and cents to our members, but about being responsive to our viewers and listeners.

Meanwhile on the news side of things, being able to provide proper coverage of all the races could become problematic as well. Currently the races in the spring are the "only game in town" so to speak, and providing forums, debates or interviews for candidates is generally not an issue. Should those be combined with the current races in the fall, it will be extremely difficult for stations to provide air time for all.

I thought you should have this background while deliberating SB 211. Obviously whatever the Legislature decides, broadcasters will do their best to accommodate everyone. Thank you.