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Senate Ethic, Elections, and Local Government Committee
Senate Bill 211

February 25, 2013

Chairman Pyle and Members of the Committee

I am Stuart Little appearing on behalf of Johnson County Government. I appear today in opposition to Senate Bill 211. Senate Bill 211 would move municipal elections to the fall election cycle and require that they be partisan in nature. We have one objection to Senate Bill 211 and urge the Committee to not advance this bill.

- Johnson County currently holds Board of County Commissioner quadrennial elections in the fall primary and general election cycle
- Johnson County elections are held without partisan identification
- The Johnson County Home Rule Charter was authorized by Kansas law. K.S.A. 19-2685 required the charter to be submitted to the voters. The charter was approved by the voters at a general election held on November 7, 2000, with an effective date of January 11, 2001.
- The Charter requires a new charter commission be appointed every 10 years. Each charter commission may recommend changes to the charter. Any changes must be approved at an election.
- The last charter commission convened in 2011. The final report of the commission was submitted on February 1, 2012 and it did not recommend any changes to the charter. The next charter commission will be convened in 2021.
- Any legislation that mandates a change in the Johnson County Home Rule Charter, such as a requirement that elections be partisan, will violate the public vote of the people of Johnson County, since voters approved our current form of election.
- Section 10 (b) that requires partisan elections is contrary to the expressed and affirmed will of the voters of Johnson County.

I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.