



Testimony

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Local Elections SB 211

Delivered to: Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City opposes SB 211 because it is a bad idea which will complicate the elections process; hurt candidates running in local elections; and is yet another big government, big brother intrusion into local affairs.

City elections are non-partisan for good reason. The community issues which become the focus of a Mayor or City Council race are not about Republican or Democrat talking points. They are about issues which affect each and every city in a very local way. Politicizing those elections with national and state partisan political topics will hurt the development and administration of public policy which addresses the most pressing community needs.

The measure will hurt local candidates because they will be lost in the long ballots which contain races for President, Congress, Governor and Legislature. Few will pay attention to a local city race with all of those bigger races on the ballot. That hurts the local community because issues affecting the city will not be discussed and debated the way they are now with Spring elections. Also, raising money will be very difficult for Mayoral and City Council candidates when people are being tapped to give campaign contributions to all of those other offices. Unless of course the State Republican and Democrat parties step-in and give contributions. And if that happens, it further politicizes the local, community based campaigns.

This proposal will not save money, in fact, in Wyandotte County it will increase the costs of running elections. And the State Budget Director estimates it will cause \$566,000 in additional costs for Kansas counties in 2014.

Finally, once again the Kansas Legislature is looking to meddle in the business of local government. There has been no outcry for moving City and School elections from Spring to Fall except from partisan political activists who see an advantage in furthering the political agenda of their particular party.