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SENATE ETHICS, ELECTIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE HEARING ON SB 145

Written Opposition to SB 145 on behalf of the City of Shawnee

By Katie Killen, Assistant to the City Manager

March 13, 2013

Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee:

The City of Shawnee strongly opposes SB 145. This bill seeks to make local elections partisan and moves them from the spring to the fall of odd numbered years. The City of Shawnee opposes this for the following reasons:

- The bill swaps one free standing election for another and will require cities across the state to change their entire process for election terms and procedures.
- Partisan elections only encourage further division by bringing Washington style politics to the local level. Cities face challenges that often do not match up with federal and state partisan issues. Making races partisan only seeks to bring federal and state issues into the local arena.
- Finally, one of the most compelling reasons this bill should not be passed is its disregard for what the residents of our community have expressly supported in Charter ordinances that utilize non-partisan elections in the spring. The City of Shawnee has had a history of non-partisan elections and continues to have in updates to charter ordinances which have not been protested. Additionally, residents in Johnson County have voted to include non-partisan elections of county commissioners in their County Charter.

For these reasons, the City asks you to uphold what our residents support, non-partisan spring elections, and not vote to pass SB 145 out of committee. Thank you for your time and consideration.

