

Johnson County Election Office



Brian D. Newby
Election Commissioner

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE RE: HB 2185

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide comments related to HB 2185.

The bill is very straightforward and is something I've been advocating for years—creation of a teacher in-service day to allow schools as polling places.

In the presidential election in 2004, just before I was appointed as the Johnson County Election Commissioner, 102 polling places were in schools. That represented 36 percent of our 286 polling places were in schools. This past November, only four were in schools, down to just 2 percent of our total.

The primary driver of this loss has been security issues in the wake of the Sandy Hook shootings in 2013. While there hasn't been a case of polling place violence in Johnson County or Kansas in general, safety of our children rightly is a central concern to all.

This bill recognizes the great value schools have in providing stable, consistent locations for voting, while ensuring children are out of those buildings and any unforeseen harm's way on election days.

I am thankful for the leadership of Representative Esau and this Committee in addressing this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.