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Office of the Crawford County Clerk

March 9, 2015

Honorable Kansas State Representative Mark Kahrs
Chairman, House Committee on Elections
and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Re: Senate Bill 171, Concerning Municipality & School Elections

Chairman Kahrs and Distinguished Committee Members,

As Crawford County Clerk and Election Officer, I thank you for your time in allowing me to testify on this bill. The KCCEOA adopted a resolution in 2012 that opposes moving the City and School Elections from the spring of odd-numbered years to the fall of even-numbered years. I have identified several issues that I feel should be considered prior to making this change. The KCCEOA does not oppose moving the City and School Elections to the fall of odd years and keeping them as non-partisan elections.

By moving these elections to coincide with other federal, state and local elections many jurisdictions will have to print two ballots to include all the races. Many counties use all paper ballots and this will affect us drastically. With two ballots it will be much easier for mistakes to be made at the polling place by both election workers and by voters and it will be more difficult to verify the number of ballots voted when performing audits. The number of races on the ballot will make it more difficult for voters to research issues and candidates. Making city and school elections partisan does not mean that those entities will end up with better governing boards and most federal employees will no longer be eligible to serve on those boards. If you truly want to increase voter turnout, it might be wise to look at mail ballot elections and other possibilities. KCCEOA members also want to have better voter turnout, but not at the expense of accuracy.

All of the Election Officials in Kansas work hard to make sure that Kansas Elections are administered in a professional manner. We oppose this bill because we feel that the resulting elections will be much harder to manage and they will be more prone to errors. Thank you for allowing me to testify on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald P. Pyle".

Donald P. Pyle
Crawford County Clerk and Election Officer
countyclerk@ckt.net