

Rodney D. Edmondson
Cherokee Co. Election Officer
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March 9, 2015

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

Re: Senate Bill 171 Regarding Municipal & School Elections

Chairman Kahrs and Distinguished Committee Members,

As the Cherokee County Clerk and Election Officer, I thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on this bill. I stand in support of the KCCEOA and my fellow Election Officers in opposition to moving the City and School Elections from the spring of odd-numbered years to the fall of even-numbered years.

I would like to address Chairman Kahrs comments on KSNT regarding last week's primary elections. The Chairman is quoted as saying "several rural counties did not even have enough candidates file to require and necessitate a primary election". There are two key points that I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee.

First, according to my research, during the 2011 Legislative Session K.S.A. 2010 Supp. 25-2021 was amended and the number of qualified candidates for school district elections that is necessary before a primary election is called was increased. Prior to the amendment a primary election was necessary if candidates equaled more than two times the number of positions to be elected. After the amendment, that number increased to more than three times the number of positions to be elected. Cherokee County had a history of school primary elections prior to that amendment, but has not had a school primary since then.

Second, Cherokee County currently has five cities of the second class, and two cities of the third class. All seven cities have exercised their Home Rule Authority and opted out of K.S.A. 25-2108a requiring primary elections for Kansas cities. At this point, absent of regulations prohibiting such action, it would not matter how many candidates file for city offices in Cherokee County, nor would it make any difference whether elections were to be held on the even-numbered or odd-numbered years a primary election would not take place.

As my colleagues have testified, there are options that we believe would increase voter turnout without jeopardizing the integrity or accuracy of local elections. Thank you for allowing me to testify on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney D. Edmondson", is written over a horizontal line.

Rodney D. Edmondson
Cherokee County Clerk & Election Officer