



SEWARD COUNTY
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To: House Committee on Elections
From: Stacia Long, Seward County Clerk/Election Official
RE: Written Testimony on Senate Bill 171

March 11, 2015

My name is Stacia Long, and I am the County Clerk and Election Official in Seward County in Southwest Kansas. On behalf of the constituents of Seward County, I thank the Committee for holding this hearing and for providing me the opportunity to testify in Opposition to the proposed Compromise on Senate Bill 171.

Voter Apathy is a nationwide problem. While I am very much in favor of changes that could increase voter participation, I believe that this compromise could actually do exactly the opposite of what its implied intentions are.

Combining all elections to the fall would increase the already lengthy ballot in Seward County, as we are one of four counties in Kansas required to print ballots and election material in English and Spanish. This would most definitely require the need for multiple pages to the ballot and would make the election more difficult to manage with accuracy.

During Fall Elections, with the ballot being longer, it creates longer wait lines at the polls. This compromise will only lengthen that wait time, and I am concerned that many voters may actually choose to not vote if they are required to wait too long. This has already been an issue in the past here in Seward County and I believe across the State of Kansas.

With the budget shortfalls being seen at the state and local level, it would be a financial hardship on many to increase the number of Ballots and touch screen machines at each polling place, not to mention the increase in the number of Election Board Workers to manage each polling place.

Voters are also buried in election information about our statewide and county office seekers in November even years. Asking voters to also study city and school board candidates at the same time will decrease voter awareness and will result in uneducated choices. Our office fields several calls to clarify the elections as they are, and further confusing voters with multiple races will only lead to more frustration and apathy.

We need to provide Kansans an election process that allows them to make educated decisions by being able to properly vet each candidate in each race.

I respectfully request that you **not** support the compromise on SB 171 and pass the bill in its current form.

Stacia D. Long, Seward County Clerk/Election Official