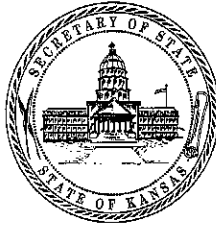


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STATE OF KANSAS

House Committee on Elections

Testimony on House Bill 2398

Bryan A. Caskey, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
for Elections & Legislative Matters

March 16, 2015

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2398. This bill would cancel the 2016 presidential preference primary but maintain the laws that call for a primary in future presidential election years. This bill is primarily a cost saving measure.

The Secretary of State's office coordinated with the county election offices to conduct the presidential primary in 1992, the last time a primary was held in Kansas. We are ready to implement whatever policy the Legislature sets, but recognizing that the current state budget climate makes it unlikely that the Legislature will appropriate funding for the presidential primary, we propose this bill to cancel the 2016 primary to ensure that the Secretary of State's office and the county election offices are not left with a statutory obligation to conduct a primary without funding.

If the Legislature chooses not to pass this legislation, there will be a 2016 presidential primary, and in case that happens, the Secretary of State's office will be requesting a budget amendment for approximately \$1.75 million to pay the expenses of the primary.

Under current law, counties conduct the primary as they would any other election. They submit bills to the Secretary of State's office requesting reimbursement for their direct expenses associated with the primary. The Secretary of State is directed by law to review the requests in coordination with the Division of Accounts and Reports and to reimburse the counties.

With this legislation, the Secretary of State is not taking a stand either for or against the presidential preference primary. He is raising the policy question for the Legislature to decide. If the Legislature wishes to have a primary, it may appropriate the funds for it and dispose of this bill. If the Legislature does not wish to fund the primary, we urge passage of this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.