

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HB 2543

TO: Chairman Mark Kahrs, Vice-Chairman Keith Esau, and members of the House Elections Committee

FROM: James Howell, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, Sedgwick County, KS

Sedgwick County supports the passage of HB 2543 requiring the audit of elections. This bill was a collaboration of the Secretary of State's office and the local election officials. It addresses the need for transparency in the election process while sufficiently protecting the privacy of an individual's vote.

With today's technology and various ways to collect information, the public almost views election results in real time. The election officials who conduct such elections know that these preliminary and unofficial results are merely one step in the process to certified election results. K.S.A. 25-3104 provides that the canvassing of election results occur quickly so that certified results are not unnecessarily delayed. HB 2543 allows for the audit to occur in the interim between when the election is held and when the county board of canvassers certifies the election. The audit is conducted in a public setting with notice to the public, is bi-partisan, and provides a statistically relevant sample without causing unnecessary delay in the certification process. Most importantly, it provides results the public can trust, and does so without tying the individual vote cast to an individual voter. This mechanism protects the privacy of the individual voter while simultaneously providing public transparency.

If elections are the lifeblood of our Republic, then voter confidence is the heart that pumps it. HB 2543 is about giving the voters election results they can be confident in. Sedgwick County urges its passage.