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STATE OF KANSAS

House Committee on Elections

Testimony on Senate Bill 79

Kris W. Kobach
Secretary of State

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 79. This bill deals with the Secretary of State's duties to notify the voting public that a concurrent resolution was adopted by both houses of the legislature creating a statewide vote on a constitutional amendment at an upcoming election. Current law requires the Secretary of State's office to publish notice of the constitutional amendment three times statewide in the weeks preceding the election. Senate Bill 79 would (1) reduce the statewide publication from three to one, (2) require posting of a website notice on the Secretary of State's website and the state website, and (3) specify that publication expenses are paid from the state general fund.

I propose this legislation because of the expense of the three-time publication requirement. Depending on the length of the concurrent resolution, publication costs range from \$70,000 to more than \$300,000. In most cases the Legislature has appropriated funds to the Secretary of State to cover the publication costs. If such appropriations are not made, as was the case in 2010, it has a negative impact on the budget of my office, which is totally fee funded.

Current law requires the concurrent resolution to be sent to each county election office to be available for public inspection and also to be posted at each polling place on election day. This, coupled with the one-time newspaper publication and website notices will provide ample opportunity for the voting public to be aware of the issues to be voted on.

Thank you for your consideration.