

February 10, 2015

Honorable Kansas State Senator Mitch Holmes
Chairman, Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections
and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Re: Senate Bill 171, Concerning Municipality & School Elections

Chairman Holmes and Distinguished Committee Members,

As Crawford County Clerk and Election Officer, I thank you for your time in allowing me to testify on this bill. The KCCEOA adopted a resolution in 2012 that opposes moving the City and School Elections from the spring of odd-numbered years to the fall of even-numbered years. I have identified several issues that I feel should be considered prior to making such a change.

By moving these elections to coincide with other federal, state and local elections many jurisdictions will have to print two ballots to include all the races. My county uses all paper ballots and this will affect us drastically. This will make it much easier for mistakes to be made at the polling place by both election workers and by voters and it will be more difficult to verify the number of ballots voted when performing audits. The number of races on the ballot will make it more difficult for voters to research issues and candidates. Making city and school elections partisan does not mean that those entities will end up with better governing boards and most federal employees will not be eligible. If you truly want to increase voter turnout, it might be wise to look at mail ballot elections and other possibilities. By funneling more election issues to the general election and giving the election officials more options for conducting elections we can increase voter turnout without getting local elections tied up with more divisive state and national elections.

All of the Election Officials in Kansas work hard to make sure that Kansas Elections are administered in a professional manner. I oppose this bill because I feel that the resulting elections will be much harder to manage. I ask that you carefully consider these factors in making your decision on this matter. Thank you for allowing me to testify and for allowing me to share the reasons that I do not support this change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald P. Pyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donald" being the most prominent.

Donald P. Pyle
Crawford County Clerk and Election Officer
countyclerk@ckt.net