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Senate Ethics and Elections Committee
Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 171

February 11, 2015

Chairman Holmes and Members of the Committee

I am Stuart Little appearing on behalf of Johnson County Government. I appear today in opposition to Senate Bill 171 related to one issue. Senate Bill 171 would require that elections for Johnson County Chairman and Commission be partisan in nature.

- Johnson County currently holds Board of County Commissioner quadrennial elections in the fall primary and general election cycle
- Johnson County elections are held without partisan identification.
- The Johnson County Home Rule Charter was authorized by Kansas law. K.S.A. 19-2685 required the Charter to be submitted to the voters. The Charter was approved by the voters at a general election held on November 7, 2000, with an effective date of January 11, 2001.
- The Charter requires a new charter commission be appointed every 10 years. Each charter commission may recommend changes to the charter. Any changes must be approved at an election.
- The last charter commission convened in 2011. The final report of the commission was submitted on February 1, 2012 and it did not recommend a change to make elections partisan. The next charter commission will be convened in 2021.
- Any legislation that mandates a change in the Johnson County Home Rule Charter, such as a requirement that elections be partisan, will violate the public vote of the people of Johnson County, since voters approved our current form of election.
- Section 14 (b) that requires partisan elections is contrary to the expressed and affirmed will of the voters of Johnson County.

I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.