



February 10, 2015

Chairman Mitch Holmes
Members of the Senate Commerce Committee

Re: Opposition to SB 171

Chairman Holmes and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Kansas City Kansas Area Chamber of Commerce please accept this written testimony in opposition to SB 171 altering local elections in Kansas.

Our community is unique in Kansas in that in 1997, a citizen-led initiative resulted in a consolidated local government in Wyandotte County now referred to as the Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas/Wyandotte County. That initiative has led to a more transparent and effective local government for our community paving the way for what is now a vibrant business and economic hub in Kansas.

Making local elections partisan would be especially onerous in Wyandotte County, where much of the voting public is of one political party. Yet, many of our locally elected officials are not members of that party. Thus, if local elections were to become partisan-based, it would likely have an impact on recruiting candidates to serve.

We appreciate the Senate's interest in boosting voter turnout in our elections, but this approach misses the mark and could well lead to fewer voters actually casting votes for what would be "down ballot" races. On a crowded ballot with federal and state races, data indicates there is a drop off from voters who don't complete what would become a very long ballot.

In the end, the KCK Chamber believes local elections should be left to the local community. We strongly encourage you to oppose this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact by phone at 913-905-9522 or by email at greg@kckchamber.com.

Greg Kindle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregory S. Kindle".

Interim President