

Gary L. Adrian

Mayor

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February 10, 2015

Darla Conner, Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections Secretary

To the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections:

The City of Colby would like to formally testify against the passage of SB 171 to make City elections partisan and combine them with State and Federal elections. I strongly oppose the adoption of Senate Bill 171.

Making the local elections partisan is nothing short of attacking the Home Rule powers given the local government entities. Using the Home Rule authority, the City of Colby is extremely sound financially, offers many services to elevate the quality of life for its citizens, and provides leadership to maintain and develop a reasonable plan for the future. That certainly cannot be said for the **State of Kansas Legislature!!**

Below are several reasons why we feel this should not be passed:

By passing this legislation it would eliminate a percentage of the eligible voters per the federal Hatch Act and the Department of Defense Directive 1344.10. Candidates that are federal employees or on active duty in the military would not be eligible to run in partisan elections.

The City of Colby believes that holding the elections with the State and Federal elections would cause the local issues to be buried in the spotlight of larger, more covered debates.

With the passage of SB 171 it takes away the flexibility communities have in regards to frequency of elections; length of terms; the use of wards to ensure distributed representation; and the use of odd-year elections for sales tax issues, bond issues, and other local issues requiring a vote of the citizens. This passage would almost guarantee an increase in special elections which contradict the reasons for moving the elections.

Colby has been served well by the current electoral process adopted by the City of Colby:

- 1) Mayor elected to a 4-year term
- 2) City divided into 4 wards to guarantee the differing neighborhoods are equally represented
- 3) The Council has 2 councilpersons per ward for 4-year terms elected in alternate two-year cycles.

It has been well documented that when citizens are satisfied with local elected personnel, officials run unopposed. This year the mayor and 4 council seats are running unopposed. Let there be a topic of controversy or problems arise, then there will be numerous candidates and very high voter turnout.

In summary, the City of Colby feels there could be several other ways of increasing voter turnout rather than completely changing the law governing municipal elections. Again, we oppose the passage of SB 171 in its current written form. The current election process has been in effect since 1861. If there were problems with this process, the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Mayors' Association would address the problems.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary L. Adrian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "A".

Gary L. Adrian

City of Colby Mayor

Member of the LKM Governing Body

Member of the Kansas Mayors' Association Governing Body