



City of Lawrence

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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CITY MANAGER

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CITY COMMISSION

MAYOR
MIKE AMYX

COMMISSIONERS
JEREMY FARMER
DR. TERRY RIORDAN
ROBERT J. SCHUMM
MICHAEL DEVER

February 9, 2015

Hon. Mitch Holmes, Chair
Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections
159-South, Statehouse
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Re: Local Election Process Legislation

Dear Senator Holmes and Senate Committee Members:

The City of Lawrence is opposed to any legislation that makes city elections partisan, or that moves municipal elections to the fall and on the same ballot as state and federal elections. Please accept this letter as written testimony in opposition to legislation scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday, February 11th.

Moving municipal elections to the fall will diminish media coverage and attention on important local issues. Voters will focus on state and national races, and may not devote sufficient time to educate and inform themselves on local candidates and local issues. Forums focused on local candidates and local issues, and local campaign literature will get lost amid all of the other campaigns. Furthermore, the ballots will become longer and more complicated and could further frustrate and confuse voters. Local elected officials make many, many important decisions that impact the daily lives of local voters. Changing election laws to make it harder for voters to focus on individual local races is not good public policy.

We don't need or want our local elections to be partisan. We prefer the voters focus on issues and individuals, not political party labels. Moreover, such a move will prevent honorable, hardworking, and dedicated active duty military personnel and federal employees from seeking local office (because of the Hatch Act and Department of Defense Directive 1344.10). The primary election will be further complicated for primary voters who are not affiliated with the two major political parties. They will have to receive separate ballots for partisan and non-partisan races which may confuse them and the local election workers.

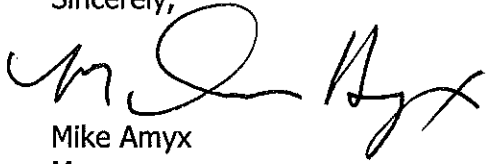
We strongly believe that current law – which provides flexibility for local communities to structure local elections to reflect our local preferences – is far better than the legislation you will consider on February 11th. We respectfully request that you **not** pass legislation making local elections partisan or requiring them to be held in conjunction with state and federal elections in the fall. If you have further questions regarding the City's position on this issue, please contact City Manager David Corliss at (785) 832-3400.

We appreciate your consideration of our testimony.



We are committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence Community

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Amyx', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mike Amyx
Mayor

c: City Commission
David L. Corliss, City Manager