



February 10, 2015

TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections
FR: Mayor Linda Reed, City of Ottawa
RE: Senate Bill 171

Honorable members of this Committee, please be advised that the elected Governing Body of the City of Ottawa, Kansas, does not support the provisions of Senate Bill 171 for the following reasons:

1. Local elections are determined best by local residents. For the State to mandate a change of this nature at the local level generates the same feelings felt by the legislature when they are subjected to federal mandates of any nature. It is also up to local residents as to the form of government they so desire and there should not be repealing of statutes that authorize such.
2. Local government should not become subject to partisan elections. Local government solves issues by connecting with all citizens regardless of party. Our citizens are not interested in being subjected to partisan debates, they simply want us to solve local issues in a cooperative manner with their best interests in mind at all times. Partisan elections will prevent federal employees as well as active duty personnel who have more than earned the right to serve their communities in local government, should they choose to do so.
3. Establishing elections in November of even years will help ensure local elections are not the focus of the electorate due to national and state races, increase the cost of local elections and may actually decrease voter participation.
4. If the goal is to increase participation in local elections, then there are to be an honest conversation between local government, citizens and legislators as to the options available for encouraging more participation by the electorate.

Again, the elected officials of the Ottawa City Commission strongly urge you to not approve SB 171 as written for the above reasons. Should you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at lreed@ottawaks.gov.

Linda Reed, Mayor
City of Ottawa
cc: Senator Caryn Tyson