

Senate Committee on Ethics & Elections

Hearing on Senate Bil 171

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Written Testimony of Kiel Mangus

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Good morning Chair Holmes, Vice Chair Fitzgerald and honorable members of the House Elections Committee. My name is Kiel Mangus, and I am the Assistant City Manager for the City of Manhattan.

The City of Manhattan opposes SB 171 that would move municipal elections to the fall and make them partisan. If moved to November, local elections would have to compete for media coverage with state and national elections, thereby diminishing voter education about local issues.

The City of Manhattan is strongly opposed to converting to partisan municipal elections. The vast majority of issues confronting local government are not partisan in nature. Political parties typically do not even develop platforms for local issues. It is completely unclear how introducing partisan politics into local elections will improve the public dialogue and debate of local issues. In addition, partisan elections may discourage otherwise qualified candidates from seeking office.

Please oppose SB171 and maintain non-partisan municipal elections with primary and general elections held in the spring of odd-numbered years. This is a mandate passed down from the State that is not needed.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions. I may be reached by mail at City Hall, City of Manhattan, 1101 Poyntz Avenue, Manhattan, KS 66502, by phone at (785) 587-2404, or by email at mangus@cityofmhk.com.