

TO: Chair Sen. Robert Olson and members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

FROM: League of Women Voters of Kansas

RE: OPPOSING SB388, AN ACT concerning elections; relating to mail ballots; requiring the use of the United States postal service when returning a ballot by mail.

DATE: Hearing Thursday, February 10, 2022; Testimony both written and virtually

The League of Women Voters of Kansas opposes SB388, which limits the return of advance mail-in ballots to personal delivery or the United States Postal Service.

Voting methods have accommodated voters over the centuries:

- men could vote from home in 17th century Massachusetts if they were “vulnerable to Indian attack”.
- some Continental Army soldiers voted in writing,
- during the Civil War, Union soldiers voted in camps and field hospitals,
- during World War I, soldiers, non-military, and those with work-related reason, including railroad employees and traveling salesmen, voted from afar,
- industrialization and mobility placed more demand on the absentee ballot.

Citizens are asking for advance mail-in ballots for their convenience and flexibility:

- Eight states allow all elections to be conducted by mail: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington.
- Two states permit counties to opt into conducting elections by mail: Nebraska and North Dakota.
- Nine states allow specific small elections to be conducted by mail: Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming.
- Four states permit all-mail elections for certain small jurisdictions.

Kansans still have reason to need a variety of ways to return ballots. Since ballots can not be sent prior to 20 days before an election – equal to 14 business days, and mail can take a week to 10 days to arrive, it is necessary to have quicker, guaranteed options for ballot delivery back to the county election office.

Please vote no on SB388 so that our Kansas voters, those both in and out of state during an election, have adequate ways to return their advance mail-in ballot.

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Testifying for:

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