



TO: Chair Pat Proctor and members of the House Committee on Elections

DATE: Hearing Tuesday, January 24, 2023 WRITTEN and VIRTUAL TESTIMONY

RE: OPPONENT- HB 2013: Requiring a runoff election between the top two candidates whenever a candidate for a statewide office fails to receive a majority of the votes cast at a general or special election.

FROM: Cille King, Advocacy Chair, 785-766-6992; cilleking@gmail.com, League of Women Voters of Kansas

The League of Women Voters of Kansas opposes HB 2013: Requiring a runoff election elections.

Runoff elections are costly to taxpayers, often have fewer voters show up due to political exhaustion, are overly burdensome to County Election Offices, and at least in Georgia's last two U.S. Senate runoff elections, didn't change the results from the General Election.

Kansas could learn from other states' experience at runoff elections. The *Washington Post* published an article on December 14, 2022, "Georgia secretary of state calls for end to runoff elections". The entire article can be found here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/12/14/georgia-runoff-election/>

Here are some key points from the article:

"Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger on Wednesday called on the state legislature to eliminate runoff voting for general [elections](#) after another bitter overtime election gripped the state earlier this month.

"Raffensperger, a Republican, cited the added stress that conducting a runoff election puts on counties and voters as part of his reasoning.

"Whether it is a four-week general election runoff or a nine-week runoff, voters do not want to deal with politics in the middle of their holidays," Raffensperger said in a statement to *The Washington Post*. "And it puts significant pressure on our election officials who need to focus on certifying and auditing the election results."

"The secretary also said in a statement that Georgia is "one of the only states that always seems to have a runoff." Its peculiar runoff system is the [product](#) of post-segregationist election laws, which lawmakers later admitted were intended to suppress emerging Black political power."

League of Women Voters of Kansas

225 SW 12th St, Topeka, KS 66612 • 785-234-5152 • www.lwvk.org • copresidents@lwvk.org

Kansas might consider an “**Instant Runoff Election**”, also known as “**Ranked Choice Voting**”, where voters rank their choices and if a candidate doesn't receive at least 50% of the votes, the candidate with the fewest votes, will have their voters' 2nd choice votes distributed to the other candidates. This distribution would continue until a candidate has at least 50% of the votes.

Ranked Choice Voting has some **pros**: determines the candidate with the strongest support, encourages civil campaigning, reduces wasted votes, and eliminates the need for multiple elections, and it favors the voters. There are also some **cons**: it's complicated, the person with the most first votes can lose, your vote might not count if it's “exhausted”, and it delays the results.

If the Kansas Legislature would choose Ranked Choice Voting, we suggest that it not be implemented for at least 8 years, to give Election Offices and voters time to make the change and understand the process.

We ask that you vote NO on HB 2013.