

March 7th, 2023

Caleb Smith
Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
House Committee on Elections

Members of the Elections Committee,

My name is Caleb Smith; I am a Campaign Director for Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

Kansas Appleseed opposes SB 208.

This bill as currently written would ban the use of remote ballot boxes statewide. This would create a completely unnecessary burden on voting rights and serve no purpose other than making it harder for Kansans to vote. Remote ballot drop boxes provide a safe, secure, and trusted voting method that has been utilized in Kansas since 1978, without any issue or controversy until very recently.¹

Rural voters would be especially negatively affected if this bill were to become law. While postal delivery times are often slowest in rural zones, rural voters often express confidence in being able to physically see their ballot deposited into a secure ballot drop box accessible only by election officials.² This reassurance extends not only to rural voters, but to typical voters from across the state and even their elected officials who often report a greater sense of trust in voting methods where they can see their ballot being physically deposited.³

The trust in the security of remote drop boxes is far reaching and extends beyond any one subset of voters. Recent surveys have shown that remote ballot drop boxes are regarded by the majority of all voters as a reliable method of voting.⁴ These same surveys show that voters support increasing the availability of remote ballot drop boxes and generally expanding access to the ballot box.⁵ Election officials from across the country have similarly voiced their trust in the security of ballot drop boxes, including officials from Kansas.⁶ These surveys from the most

¹ <https://www.kake.com/story/48413787/battle-over-ballot-drop-boxes>

² <https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/politics/state/2020/09/08/trump-says-ballot-drop-boxes-are-rsquodisasterrsq-kanas-lawmakers-see-otherwise/43102391/>

³ Id.

⁴ <https://www.americanbar.org/content/aba-cms-dotorg/en/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2022/05/aba-survey-finds-support-for-making-voting-easier/>

⁵ Id.

⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/voting-rights-2022-midterm-elections-covid-health-wisconsin-c61fa93a12a1a51d6d9f4e0a21fa3b75>

recent nationwide post election survey of state election officials reported no major “cases of fraud, vandalism, or theft” resulting from the use of ballot drop boxes.⁷

With such widespread support for the security of remote ballot drop boxes, it seems clear that attempting to ban such a secure, voter-trusted option for voting would serve only to undermine voter confidence in the electoral process.⁸ SB 208 would only manage to make it harder for Kansans to exercise their fundamental right to vote at the ballot box without any demonstrated need or benefit for administering safe, fair, and secure elections.

⁷ Id.

⁸<https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/3568986-states-regulating-ballot-drop-boxes-should-check-the-science-first/>