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Testimony to the House Elections Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB 208, removal of ballot boxes

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 208.

Voting in Kansas is safe and effective as indicated by our very own Secretary of State. I've used the drop boxes, and I appreciate the ability to vote when it is convenient. However, for some people it isn't an issue of convenience. It is a necessity to be able to vote. Drop boxes ensure everyone has a chance to vote no matter the time of day. Kansas has many diverse people with varying life situations. We can't make the assumption that all people have the same abilities, time constraints, and financial means.

The bill limits remote ballot boxes to one per county with the box located inside the county election office. There are many people whose work would prevent them from being able to get to the box during office hours. Many people do not have vacation time available to them, and they can't afford to miss work. In addition, the elderly and disabled might have difficulty finding a ride or assistance to get to the office during the day. The beauty of a drop off box is that it allows voters to vote when it is convenient for them.

The bill states all counties regardless of geographic or population size would have one drop box. This is very limiting in either situation. Many people in Kansas lack transportation, and if public transportation is an option, it might not run at times that work for the voter to use it to get to the office. Furthermore, if you live in a densely populated county, it could be limiting to have so many people trying to park, and get in/out of the building. Election offices are not typically built for large crowds and lack the necessary parking as well as the functional layout of the building.

The bill states the box must be continuously monitored by two individuals of different parties. This puts a heavy burden on the Election office which is often understaffed not to mention the extra cost.

The bill states the ballots returned using a drop box shall be preserved separately. I see no need for this. If you have already moved the boxes into the Election office, and it is watched by two people from different parties, there isn't a need to keep them separate. Doing this would add to the burden of Election workers and create unnecessary work for them.

Johnson County has had a robust advanced voting system which includes numerous drop boxes for years. No problems or issues have presented themselves. Voting should be the will of the people, and the government should do what it can to ensure access for all people. Please vote no on bill SB 208.

Amy Hinrichs
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