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## STATE OF KANSAS

February 5, 2024

### **Testimony on HB2518 (In-Person / Proponent)**

House Committee on Elections

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

Chairman Proctor and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2518.

Currently, the Secretary of State is limited to only providing counties with recommendations on the use of remote ballot boxes. HB2518 would permit the Secretary of State to ensure all counties that choose to use remote ballot boxes implement the same standard procedures, best practices, and security measures.

Remote ballot boxes have proved to be beneficial and popular with voters. Their use has grown rapidly as voters become more concerned with postal delivery. We anticipate that over 70,000 voters will transmit their ballots by remote box in the 2024 general election. Moreover, when used properly, remote ballot boxes substantially increase mail ballot security and enhance election integrity.

Currently about 45 counties use 1 remote box, 27 counties use 2 boxes, six counties use 3 boxes, 7 counties use more than 3 boxes, and 20 counties chose to use none.

Our office has assembled a collection of best practices compiled from government and nongovernmental entities, regulations from other states, and lessons learned from previous elections. These include provisions for:

- video monitoring,
- ballot pick-up scheduling,
- chain of custody procedures,
- criteria for box locations,
- box structural security requirements,
- protection from the elements, and
- disability access requirements.

Our only concern with the bill is the directive to “adopt” regulations by a fixed date. If the bill becomes law, our office could promptly submit a regulation into the approval process. But our office has no control over how fast the other actors in the regulation approval process would complete their roles. “Adoption,” of even a temporary regulation can take months to complete.

We respectfully request the passage of HB2518.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the committee.

*/Clayton Barker*

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