

March 23, 2023  
SB 321 Opponent  
Elaine Stephen, Kansas Voter, Representing Self

Chair Thompson and Members of the Committee,

#### **Cost to Counties and Burdens on Election Offices**

- By adding a third election cycle during presidential years, SB 321 would create an unfunded mandate for counties. The presidential primary would require all the poll workers, voting machines, polling places, advance ballots, public education, etc that other elections do. FY 2022 Revised [Elections Operation budget for Sedgwick County](#) alone is \$1.1 million. That covered both the primary and general elections. Adding on a 3<sup>rd</sup> election would bring the year's total to roughly \$1.65 million. (\$1.1 million divided by 2 elections = \$0.55 million/election x 3 elections = \$1.65 million) While this is extremely oversimplified, this is one county out of 105 and, for this county alone, the Elections Office budget of \$1.9 million (FY 2022 Revised) would increase by 29% in years where the Elections Office is responsible for three elections.
- Recruiting more poll workers for another all-day election plus early voting. Local jurisdictions already [struggle to recruit enough](#) poll workers for our elections.
- Voter awareness. This would include ad buys, mailers, and updating digital assets so that voters know when, where, and why they need to vote.
- In presidential election years, elections officials are already spending the entire year trying to plan for the magnitude of the primary and general elections. Adding on a third election in these years would overwhelm already strained staff.

#### **Limits to Parties by State-run Presidential Primaries**

- The parties tend to want to choose their own presidential primary dates or even whether or not there is a presidential primary that year. Making the elections state-run would eliminate that flexibility.
- The parties may want to choose a different voting method, like ranked choice voting, that's demonstrated to result in candidates who win more general elections. The Virginia GOP used ranked choice voting to nominate Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a candidate who came out of the primary strong enough to win the general election. Kansas Democrats used ranked choice voting in their 2020 presidential primary. If the primary is state-run, the parties will have to follow the general rules for Kansas elections instead of tailoring the election to nominate the strongest candidate. ([Article from R Street on ranked choice voting and presidential primaries](#))

#### **Taxation without Representation for Unaffiliated Voters**

- Unaffiliated voters are already taxed the same as all other voters for the August primary, even though unaffiliated voters are unable to participate in that primary. Putting the presidential primary under the jurisdiction of election offices would add to that unfair tax burden on independents. It is not right that unaffiliated voters must pay for the nominating processes of private political organizations and seems to violate our freedom of assembly.

#### **2024 Only?**

- SB 321 changes the rules for 2024 only. This inconsistency will increase voter confusion, increase the amount of public education needed and the burden on the election offices to provide that, as well as force election offices to arrange an entire new election cycle for just one year. What makes 2024 any different than other presidential caucuses? Why should taxpayers should be on the hook for a carve-out for private organizations' 2024 nomination process?

I recommend this committee oppose SB 321. Thank you for your consideration, and I stand for any questions.

Respectfully submitted,  
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