



2023 - 2024 Executive board

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January 25, 2024 - Kansas House Elections Committee hearing on HB 2512, relating to in-person advance voting deadline – Neutral testimony

Chairman Proctor and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Elections Officials Association (KCCEOA). The KCCEOA is a statewide organization with 109 members including all county clerks and election commissioners in Kansas. Our duties are significant under statute and one of our most publicly facing functions is free and fair administration of elections. We take this duty very seriously. We prepare for every possible, and impossible, scenario which could occur.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the KCCEOA membership. We believe that the legislature sets the policy, and we implement it. We follow the laws and regulations to allow the public to participate in free and fair elections. The KCCEOA prepared a legislative agenda which was developed through a policy committee process and agreed to by a majority of the members. One of the items specifically included is: "Maintain the status quo with regard to election, registration and canvass schedules...".

I am confident that many election officials would appreciate the reduced workload on the day prior to each election by changing the deadline for in-person early voting from noon on Monday to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday. The day before each election is very busy with final election day preparations and delivery of equipment and supplies to polling places. This change would allow more time to prepare final pollbooks, but there are many in-person voters that are used to voting on Monday until noon. Since this is a presidential election year with the highest turnouts, to make a significant change like this could be upsetting or confusing to voters. In my county we regularly have more voters in the 4-hour period on Monday than we have on some of the other 9 days we are open; historically about 10% of our total early voters vote on that Monday. We appreciate adding the option to provide early voting on Sunday. I am unsure how many election offices would choose to expand their early voting days, but they should have the option to do so based on the needs of their respective jurisdictions.

I would like to note that the changes to section KSA 25-1128(g) on pages 6-7 stating that "All advance voting ballots returned by personal delivery ... shall be delivered to the election office not later than 7:00 p.m. on the second day preceding the date of the election" would eliminate the personal delivery of mailed advance ballots to the election office or to any polling place until 7:00 p.m. on election day allowed under KSA 25-1132.

The KCCEOA is neutral on HB 2504 as currently presented, but we ask that the committee hear our concerns and act accordingly. I will gladly stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Rick Piepho
Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair