

February 21, 2023

To: Kansas Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
From: Americans for Tax Reform
Re: **Support SB 210**

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today in support of SB 210, legislation that would allow candidates to embrace greater transparency while running for local office. By allowing candidates to identify themselves with political parties that take firm and contrasting positions on the issue of taxes, this bill could help protect the interests and wallets of taxpayers across Kansas.

Many local elected officials have the power to raise and lower various taxes and fees paid by residents of their districts. School board members, for example, can set a per-mil property tax rate for a period of up to 5 years. School districts can also ask voters to approve bonds – new debt that requires years of service with taxpayer dollars.

Currently, there is a notable lack of mechanisms that give voters transparency and the opportunity to know where a particular candidate truly stands on the issue of taxes. Many municipal elections are held in odd years, or are scheduled during months like April or June, when many voters are unaware that an election with real implications for their local tax burden is taking place.

Indeed, the outcome of local elections can have significant consequences for taxpayers in Kansas. Voters have a right to know as many details about the candidates on their ballots as possible. Party affiliation can confer a host of important associations and high-level information about where a candidate stands, especially on the issues of higher property taxes, wasteful spending, and out-of-control government budgets.

Importantly, this legislation does not force candidates to adopt a party platform; they may do so of their own accord. Voters remain free to choose a candidate who decides not to commit themselves to the principles and policy aims of a political party.

Rather than force thousands of candidates to disguise their tax policy preferences behind a label of nonpartisanship, Kansas statute should at least offer the option for candidates to identify with the party of their choosing. In light of this bill's extension of political transparency to local and municipal elections, **ATR supports a vote in favor of SB 210.**

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Hull
State Affairs Coordinator
Americans for Tax Reform

722 12th Street N.W.

Fourth Floor

Washington, D.C.

20005

T: (202)785-0266

F: (202)785-0261

www.ATR.org