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STATE OF KANSAS

Testimony on HB2086 (Oral Proponent)

Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Monday, March 20, 2023

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 2086. Our office introduced this legislation as part of our ongoing commitment to modernize, improve, and secure our elections without causing voter confusion. HB2086 was passed unanimously by the House of Representatives in a vote of 122 to 0.

Over the past several years, our office has reviewed lessons learned from past elections, best practices from other states, and areas for improvement in our current election statutes. Our office coordinated with elected officials; county and city government; county election officials; political parties; and various civil rights and election integrity groups to draft this legislation. As a result, HB2086 contains over 90 statute changes to solve contradictory or vague statutes. These provisions make no material changes to the substance or structure of Kansas election law or to the voter experience.

HB2086 will increase voter confidence in Kansas' elections, especially for those who are confused by obsolete or contradictory provisions.

HB2086 consists of the following provisions:

- 32 provisions improve the administration of elections to make them more efficient and achievable for county election officers and their staff
- 21 provisions remove obsolete statutes or requirements in statute
- 15 provisions clarify vague or outdated terms
- 14 provisions address conflicting or inconsistent election laws, especially timing provisions
- 9 provisions improve transparency by mandating that any election notice required to be posted in a newspaper must also be posted on the county website
- 4 provisions strengthening security by enhancing password protection and physical security of voting equipment

Further, HB2086 includes several provisions to improve election administration by:

- Addressing the recount process, which currently requires the recount request to be filed before there is a vote count available
- Enlarging the available qualified applicants from which to select election commissioners and fill vacancies for county clerks and sheriffs
- Reaffirming that Kansas does not permit the mass mailing of advance by mail ballots to voters without an individual verified voter request
- Making contact information for precinct committee leaders available and addressing perennial issues regarding the election of precinct leaders

Please see the attached document describing each provision and its purpose. We respectfully request the committee's consideration and approval passage of HB2086.

Respectfully submitted,

Clay Barker
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
General Counsel

Attachment