

March 22, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **SB321, *Providing for a presidential preference primary election on March 19, 2024, and establishing voter registration and voting procedures for such election.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **“Objection, Your Honor!”**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Chair Thompson & Members of the Committee,

I write with objection to the less-than-24 hours given the public to read, write, and submit testimony regarding new election legislation in SB321, which proposes a change to the nature of primary candidate selection. Additionally, the bill sponsors (unnamed) have created more burdens for voters to receive and return advanced mail ballots. In deciding to submit my testimony for public record, I am first compelled to cite the committee's own (condescending) policy statement for context:

“It is the policy of the Federal and State Affairs Committee to ensure and promote free and open discussion of matters coming before the Committee. Because of the importance of issues that are to be discussed, certain rules are necessary. Just as there are rules relating to the conduct of Committee business when matters are debated among Senators, the following rules apply to the hearing process itself. By appearing before the Committee, each conferee is presumed to have read this document. Individuals wishing to present testimony before the Committee must provide a digital copy of the testimony by email, in PDF format, to the committee assistant at least 24 business hours in advance of the hearing.”

Of course SB321 was not drafted, or at least made public, until end-of-business-day just the night *before* testimony was required to be in Committee Assistant Shiela Wodtke's hands. This was a mere 15-hour notice — less than the 24-hour requirement imposed for PDF testimony to be submitted, processed and read by the committee. Might not citizens question the weight and import of the proposed legislation, given the cavalier short-shrift the Chair has shown it? Considering the committee's written policies, and how this bill has been handled, perhaps the reactionaries leading 'Fed & State' only seek conferees' acquiescence to further circumscribe elections and election processes in Kansas. This is not how representative democracy works. This is how autocrats behave.

As to the merits of the bill itself, moving from caucuses to primary elections is not, on its face, bad policy. Shrinking the time and methods that voters have to ask for and return advance mail ballots is shameful. SB321 appears to be a “solution” in search of a problem. Would that this committee had a process that could ameliorate and amend this legislation to create a silk purse for voters from a sow's ear... however, as is, I ask that you vote NO on SB321.

Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7