

STATE OF KANSAS

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HOUSE OF  
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SOCIAL SERVICE BUDGET

January 30, 2012

TO: Chairman Scott Schwab, Vice-Chairman Mario Goico, Ranking Minority Member, Ann Mah, Standing Committee on Elections

RE: HB 2425, AN ACT concerning campaign finance; relating to schools; also relating to question submitted elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 2425.

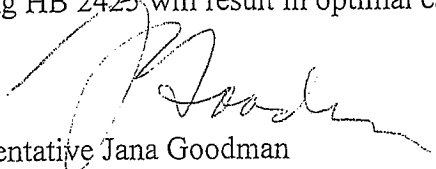
Political speech is the most protected form of speech in the United States. Without it, citizens cannot participate freely in their own governance. As lawmakers it is our duty to guard against restrictions that prevent any Kansan from expressing political opinions as they see fit.

Currently, candidates for state office, including representatives and senators, must file regular campaign finance reports with the governmental ethics commission both before and after elections. Clearly, these rules are in place to ensure that sources of funding for candidates are made known to voters.

However, under current statute many local and school board candidates, as well as groups formed to promote or oppose ballot questions do not have to follow the same rules. A notable exception is made for candidates in Wichita USD 259 school board elections.

It is important to observe that many elected local and school officials oversee very large budgets funded by taxpayers. In addition, many submitted questions involve the use of large sums of taxpayer money, e.g., school bond issues. Thus, it is important to ensure that money spent in such elections is publicly available both before and after the elections.

Enacting HB 2425 will result in optimal campaign finance transparency for Kansas voters.

  
Representative Jana Goodman