

# KANSAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



## STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANN MAH DISTRICT 53 TESTIMONY SB 389

Madam Chair and Committee:

I am testifying today in favor of SB 389. I applaud Mr. Witt's efforts to protect and preserve the voting rights of Kansans who will be disenfranchised by HB 2067 passed last session. The Senate tried to shore up the bill with a voter education requirement and a requirement for free voter IDs for all Kansans who need them and I thank you for that effort as well.

However, in visiting with nursing homes and advocacy groups, I am convinced that Kansans who have voted legally in the past will either not be able to vote or will have their votes discarded because of the new laws. I share the concerns that our efforts to inform Kansas voters about the voter ID law and any proof of citizenship requirement will fall woefully short of the need. The budget is not there and in visiting court orders from other states, especially Georgia and Indiana, I'm surprised we are not defending the voter ID law in court already.

Having said that, I do have some issues with SB 389. It is not specific enough to address the issues of our new voter ID law or proof of citizenship. For example, "voter education program" is too broad. We need to be specific about what aspects of the voter ID law are a concern (e.g., if you need a voter ID you need a birth certificate first; if you are denied a regular ballot you have the right to ask for a provisional ballot; don't stay home just because you have no photo identification).

SB 389 does not act quickly enough. To reach voters just 60 days before the general election means that we have pretty much given up on educating voters for the primary election. This year the primary election may very well be the final election in many districts. SB 389 is on the right track. It just needs more teeth, and I ask for your support in truly securing the vote in 2012 for Kansans who deserve better than to have their rights stripped by HB 2067.