

Changes to Election Laws—Presidential Primary, Filing Deadlines, Local Primary Elections, Campaign Treasurer’s Reports, Filling a Vacated Senate Office, and Others

Senate Sub. for HB 2080 makes several changes to state election laws.

Presidential Preference Primary

Under the bill, the date of the next presidential preference primary in Kansas moves from 2012 to 2016. The bill also changes the filing deadline for a candidate who wishes to appear on the ballot of the presidential preference primary from February 12 to seven weeks before such an election. The bill allows darkening of an oval, in addition to making a mark in a square, to indicate a vote in a presidential preference primary.

Filing Deadlines in Redistricting Years

Candidate filing deadlines in redistricting years are changed in the following ways:

- If new districts are established in law on or before May 10 (a change from June 10), the deadline to file a nomination petition or declare intention to become a candidate will be June 1 (a change from June 24).
- If new districts are established in law after May 10, the candidate deadline will be June 10 (a change from July 12).

Local Governments—Primary Election Triggers

For a school district, city officer, or community college trustee office, the bill requires a primary election only if more than three candidates would be on the ballot. The bill also requires the names of the top two vote-getters in the primary election to be placed onto the ballot for the general election. If the election-at-large method is used, the bill requires a primary election only if the number of candidates is more than three times the number to be elected, and the number on the general election ballot would equal twice the number to be elected.

Finney County Drainage District No. 2 Term of Office

The bill changes the term of office for directors of Drainage District No. 2 of Finney County from a three-year staggered term to a four-year staggered term.

Campaign Treasurer's Reports

The bill changes the filing requirements for campaign treasurer's reports for candidates for state office other than those elected on a statewide basis by allowing them to be filed electronically only with the Secretary of State.

Candidates Appearing in Public Service Announcements

The bill prohibits a candidate running for public office from appearing in public service announcements or having the candidate's name appear in public service announcements paid for with government funds, or certain specified private funds, beginning 60 days before the primary election and continuing through the general election. These prohibitions extend to both electronic and print media; however, the agency website and regularly used print material of the office would be excluded. Intentional violations of this prohibition can result in civil penalties.

Ending the Overlap Between Voter Registration and Advance Voting

The bill changes the deadline for voter registration to the 21st day prior to the election (from the 15th day), to end the overlap between the beginning of advance voting and the end of voter registration.

Filling a Vacated Senate Office

The bill changes election requirements for filling a vacated Senate office. If the vacancy occurs before May 1 (changed by the bill from October 15) in the second year of the term, a senator will be elected in the next general election. Anyone appointed to the office will serve until that election. The bill specifies that the nomination and election process of the successor senator will be the same as that for a regular Senate term. A person appointed to a Senate office vacated after May 1 in the second year of a term will stay in the office for the remainder of the term.

Technical Changes

Finally, the bill makes technical amendments that include the following:

- Gives authority for the Secretary of Revenue to adopt rules and regulations regarding the issuance of a free, non-driver's identification card for voting purposes, as prescribed in 2011 HB 2067;

- Allows the Secretary of Health and Environment to adopt rules and regulations regarding the issuance of a free certified copy of a birth certificate to be used to register to vote, as prescribed in 2011 HB 2067; and
- Changes the filing deadline for candidates for the governing body of extension districts from Wednesday to Tuesday, ten weeks before the election.