



# WYANDOTTE COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE

Bruce L. Newby, Election Commissioner  
Frances D. Sheppard, Assistant Election Commissioner

## HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

### Testimony on House Bill 2271

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill No. 2271.

First, I believe consolidating elections is bad public policy based on a multitude of false assumptions of what elections require of voters and of election officials. I also believe that consolidating elections will be disastrous for local candidates and issues.

Second, consolidating elections will severely impair and overwhelm our ability to conduct elections in Kansas. The current election methodology is not broken and does not need to be fixed. Kansas may have the best election laws in all of the United States. While there are some things which need to be tweaked, Kansas elections do not need to be drastically changed.

Consolidating elections will cause a host of unintended and undesirable consequences:

- Multi-page and complicated ballots; many will vote fewer races/questions and ignore the rest
- Longer ballots double or triple programming and ballot printing costs
- Ballot complexity will necessitate procurement of substantially more voting machines
- Five-minute voter time limit in the voting booth; more time causes longer voter lines
- Creates the need for more and better trained election workers
- Recruiting and retaining election workers from a rapidly shrinking pool of volunteers
- Two-year gap between elections works against recruiting, training and retention of workers
- Stagnant election worker pay which is less than minimum wage
- Increased election worker training costs and significant increase to the time needed for training
- Local candidates and issues will be unable to compete successfully to fund their campaigns
- Local candidates and issues will lose their visibility to voters
- Simultaneous candidate filings at both the state and local level creates confusion
- Increases the probability and necessity of special elections for local issues at greater cost to the taxpayer
- Assumed savings of consolidating elections is illusory
- Shifts costs to even years, but election complexity will actually increase costs
- Increases the need for more polling places with fewer locations meeting ADA requirements or willing to participate; paying more for non-public locations which meet requirements
- Increased costs (utilities, FWT) for each polling place
- Insufficient time to obtain taxpayer information for creating drainage district poll books
- Different voter eligibility criteria forces Drainage District elections to be conducted simultaneously
- Feast or famine budgets with odd-year becoming austere and even-year becoming underfunded

I oppose House Bill No. 2271 and stand for questions.

Bruce Newby  
Election Commissioner