

Dear Kansas House of Representatives Kansas Election Committee,

Good afternoon, and thank you Mr. Speaker for having me testify on this important matter. First, I want to make it clear how much I care about this state's future, and just like all of you, I want to make sure that we have qualified people in elected office here in Kansas. That is why I am here today in spirit to testify against this bill being brought forth to the Kansas House of Representatives. Allow me to clear up a misconception, I am not running for governor as a stunt, or a gag; I am running for governor because of the minimum wage worker that has to work three jobs just to get by, I am running because our education system has been lagging behind other states, I am running to get money out of politics, but most importantly, I am running to get as many people involved in politics as possible. There is especially a need right now to bring back the feeling of political efficacy among the general population because of the previous Presidential election. Due to a lack of political participation, we ended up with the two oldest and least popular candidates in modern history, and despite their advanced age, they both did things that I would only expect out of a 6<sup>th</sup> grade bully. But we have to take a step back and ask ourselves, why did people not vote? Did Americans lose faith in the political process? Can politicians no longer represent the interests of the American people? The answer is no to both of those questions. The answer is because many people did not feel that they were given the choice of a candidate that reflected their values or interests. That is why now it is imperative that all across America, barriers of participating in the political process must be torn down. We have to make it so that anyone who is willing to discuss politics respectfully and bring in their own viewpoints must have a right to run for elected office, because chances are there are others out there that see it the way they do. I know the chances are slim that I end up winning the Democratic Party's nomination for governor this August, but since I started running, I have encouraged other people my age in this state as well as in the state of Vermont to run their own campaigns for governor and other statewide offices to share their own policy viewpoints. I have brought issues such as raising the minimum wage to the table for discussion that

wouldn't have otherwise been discussed in depth. And hopefully for this race's primary and general elections, I will have increased the overall voter turnout, whether they vote for me or for another candidate. The bill presented to the house clearly discourages political participation and blocks out potentially qualified candidates based on their age. To conclude, I will leave you with a quote from President Kennedy, one of our youngest and greatest Presidents while defending his young age to the American people, "To exclude from positions of trust and command all those below the age of 44 would have kept Jefferson from writing the Declaration of Independence, Washington from commanding the Continental Army, Madison from fathering the Constitution, Hamilton from serving as secretary of the treasury, Clay from being elected speaker of the House and Christopher Columbus from discovering America."

Thank you for taking into consideration my written testimony,  
Jack Bergeson