

February 8, 2018

Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee

Chair Senator Elaine Bowers

Vice Chair Senator Steve Fitzgerald

Ranking Minority Member Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau

Testimony Regarding SB 325

Chairman Bowers and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity of introducing and speaking to SB 325.

During the 2015 session, the Legislature passed legislation to change when local elections are held, moving them from spring to fall.

In the fall of 2017, our local units of government held their first elections in November. Unfortunately, a consequence of the legislation occurred due to moving the date when newly elected officials take office. The statute states the term of office shall commence in January of the following year. This language automatically created a lame duck period within local units of government. This bill removes that lame duck period and allows those elected to take office on the date of the first regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body following the final canvass of the election.

In my community of Wyandotte county, this first year in the change of election time coincided with the election of a new mayor. It was a contested race with a new person being elected in November but unable to officially take office until January.

I don't believe the change in time of elections was intended to create a lame duck period. Having the newly elected take office as soon as possible following the final canvas contributes to a continuity of leadership and helps voters understand who is currently in office.

This is the only change that SB 325 makes to the statute, and would take effect upon publication in the statute book.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be glad to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Senator Pat Pettey
6th District