



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Serving Educational Leaders, Inspiring Student Success

www.kasb.org

Oral Neutral Testimony

on

SB 7, Moving school board officer elections and organizations from July to January

by

Leah Fliter, Advocacy and Outreach Specialist, Kansas Association of School Boards

March 12, 2019

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of KASB as neutral on **SB 7** as amended, which would move school board officer elections from July to January. It also allows local boards of education to designate their own date for those elections following organizational meetings early in the calendar year. SB 7 also allows school boards to submit to the voters a change in their voting plans at any primary or general election or at a special election.

This bill had its genesis in the unintended consequences following the enactment of the law that moved school board and city commission elections from April of odd-numbered years to November of even-numbered years. Prior to the enactment of that law, school board members were elected in April and assumed office at the first meeting in July; statute directs that the organizational meeting and election of officers take place at that time.

Under the new election system, board members are elected in November and take office in January; however, the statutory mandate for the July organizational meeting and officers election has not been changed. While some boards were able to navigate this transition smoothly, others found it difficult.

KASB consulted its members about this issue throughout the summer and fall in regional meetings across the state. Due to varying responses by local boards, our organization does not have specific legislative policy on the election date of board officers. It's likely that had SB 7 been available for our members to review prior to adopting our 2019 legislative platform, we would support SB 7.

Our adopted policies do, however, strongly support the doctrine of local control and we appreciate SB 7 providing for local designation of a date for election of officers, following an organizational meeting in January or early February. The amendment allowing local boards to determine the election at which they submit a change in voting plans is also supported by our local control policy position.

For these reasons, KASB appears as neutral yet supportive of SB 7. Thank you, and I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.