Sedgwick County Election Office
TABITHA M. LEHMAN, ELECTION COMMISSIONER
510 N. Main, Suite 101 - Wichita, KS 67203
phone - 316-660-7100 - fax - 316-660-7125
sedgwickcounty.org - voterinformation@sedgwick.gov

February 19, 2019

Honorable Kansas State Sneator Elaine Bowers
Chair, Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee and Distinguised Members fo the Committee

Re: Senate Bill 130, signatures on advance ballots

Chairman Bowers and Distinguised Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you in support of Senate Bill 130. I believe that it is important that Senate Bill 130 be passed to allow voters to cure deficiencies on their advance ballot signatures until the commencement of county canvassing and to create consistency between all 105 counties in how signature issues are handled.

Currently, our legal counsel has advised our office that voters have until 7pm on election day to cure a signature issue on their advance ballot envelope. Our concern is that this does not allow sufficient time for our office to reach out to voters whose ballots arrive the day before or on election day. Additionally, we accept ballots that were post marked by election day and that are received in our office by the Friday after the election. The current timeline does not provide a voter time to cure any deficiencies if their ballot is delivered to the county election office after election day.

I request that you consider a change in wording from “the county election officer shall contact each person” to “the county election officer shall *attempt* to contact each person”. Multiple election officials in the state have expressed concern that the language as written could open election officials up to litigation if someone does not receive the notice that we sent.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Lehman
Sedgwick County Election Commissioner