



2021 - 2022 Executive board

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Re: February 21, 2022 hearing on Senate Bill 439, relating to confirmation notice requirements – Neutral testimony, WRITTEN-ONLY testimony from Rick Piepho, representing KCCEOA.

Honorable Kansas State Senator Rob Olson
Chair, Senate, Committee on Federal and State Affairs and Distinguished Members of the Committee

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections Committee of the Kansas County Clerks and Elections Officials Association (KCCEOA). The KCCEOA is a statewide organization with 109 members including 103 publicly elected county clerks, 2 charter appointed county clerks, and additionally, four election officers from the most populous counties in Kansas. Our duties are significant under statute and one of our most public facing functions is free and fair administration of elections. We take this duty very seriously. We prepare for every possible, and impossible, scenario which could occur.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the KCCEOA membership. We believe that the legislature sets the policy and we implement it. You pass the laws, the Secretary of State works with you to develop and adopt rules, and we follow the law and regulations in an attempt to allow the public to participate in free and fair elections while complying with your intent and the Secretary's guidance. We understand and agree with the intent to build on the already secure election processes in Kansas and increasing voter confidence. For these reasons, we are appearing as neutral conferees today.

We believe that inserting an additional reason to mail a confirmation notice to verify that voters with no election-related activities in a four year period still reside at their registered address will result in a more accurate database of registrants. Mailing a confirmation notice does not mean that the voter will be cancelled or that they cannot vote. A confirmation notice provides an opportunity for the registrant to return the card and confirm their residential address. Their registration status will only be cancelled if no response is received by the day after the 2nd federal general election after the card is mailed. We would like to note that there will be increased ongoing costs to counties to mail more confirmation cards and that the costs for the initial mailing to the newly eligible recipients could be significant.

The KCCEOA is neutral on SB 439 as currently presented, but we ask that the committee consider our comments and act accordingly. I will not be able to attend the hearing so we are providing written testimony only on this bill.

Sincerely,

Rick Piepho
Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair