

Tuesday, February 7, 3:30 pm

Sonja Czarnecki, History and Social Studies Teacher, Bishop Seabury Academy

Written and Oral Testimony

Lawrence, Kansas

(785) 409-9664 / Sonja.Czarnecki@gmail.com

Chair and Members of the Elections Committee,

My name is Sonja Czarnecki, and I teach history and politics at Bishop Seabury Academy in Lawrence, Kansas. I have been helping students at Bishop Seabury register to vote for years. I'm here because I have some concerns about a portion of HB 2190 because of how it would impact my efforts and those of other teachers to register our students to vote and educate them about voting in Kansas.

There appear to be many important and helpful new rules in other parts of the bill. The part that I find confusing and potentially harmful is on page 4, lines 14-19:

*14 ...No other*

*15 entity may affiliate with a governmental agency for the purpose of*

*16 registering voters unless, as part of a joint voter registration plan, such*

*17 entity agrees to register voters using only official governmental websites*

*18 and provide voter registration information that only lists official*

*19 governmental websites.*

First, I'm not clear on what an "entity" means – as a teacher, am I an "entity" when I help students register? Are my students "entities" when they help other students? Presumably not. Also, what does it mean to "affiliate"? Is this a legal term in this bill or something less formal? For now, I'll assume that "entity" does not apply to me or my students.

Secondly, does "entity" refer to any civic organization that allows citizens to register to vote via an interface that allows for signature verification and the last four digits of one's Social Security number, i.e. the federal form? Currently, the Secretary of State website, which is the only "official government website" I am aware of, requires the use of a Kansas driver's license or a non-driver ID so they can reference a signature on file. The SoS website does not allow signatures. Not all students have drivers' licenses or non-driver IDs, but they all have Social Security numbers. There's an ease and simplicity to a process that allows voters to register or update their registrations on their touch-screen phones, with just the last four digits of their Social Security number. Most young people have those memorized, but not their driver's ID. It doesn't take much of an obstacle to discourage new voters or low-engagement voters to give up on the process. If we want an engaged and educated electorate, why shut down a legal and simple means of registration just because it's more technologically sophisticated than what the state offers?

If we want young people to vote in Kansas, care about Kansas, and stay in Kansas to live and work, then we should make civic participation as easy as possible; so easy that they too can

pass on information about how to register and remain engaged to their friends and family. I'm not sure what the intent of this portion of HB 2190 is, but it seems to want to fix a problem that isn't there.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Sonja Czarnecki