



To: House Elections Committee Chairman Representative William Sutton, Vice Chair Representative Blake Carpenter, Ranking Minority Representative Brett Parker, and members of the Committee.

From: The League of Women Voters of Kansas, Teresa Briggs, Co-President

RE: HB 2508 – AN ACT concerning the secretary of state; requiring nonpartisan elections; requiring resignation before becoming a candidate for another office; amending K.S.A. 2019 Supp. 25-101 and repealing the existing section – Supporting

Date: February 6, 2020

The League of Women Voters of Kansas supports HB 2508 proposing the requirement that the Secretary of State position be elected on a nonpartisan basis and requiring the Secretary of State to resign before becoming a candidate for another office.

The Secretary of State’s responsibility as the election “watch dog” demands nonpartisanship.

- One significant role of the Secretary of State is to serve as Kansas’ main election official, registering candidates, monitoring contributions and overseeing regulations. He/she ensures that elections are held in a fair manner, free of partisanship. However, the position of Secretary of State is currently chosen in a partisan election. ***Electing the Secretary of State based on qualifications for the expectations of the position rather than party affiliation would remove the appearance of partiality.***
- ***Allowing the Secretary of State to campaign as candidate in a partisan race for another office creates the potential for said candidate to make decisions that would impact how rules in his/her own election are enforced.*** This part of the bill not only makes sense in the perception of nonpartisanship toward the office of the Secretary of State, but also removes the prospect that the candidate could be placed in a situation requiring what might be construed as a controversial (partisan) decision.

The League of Women Voters of Kansas asks that you vote YES on HB 2508.