

February 19th, 2019

Senate Ethics and Elections Committee

Proponent of Senate Bill 43 An act concerning elections: relating to voter registration on election days; amending K.S.A. 2018 Supp. 25-2311,25-2316c and 25-3602 repealing the existing sections

Chairwoman - Senator Elaine Bowers

Vice Chair - Senator Randall Hardy

Ranking Minority - Senator David Haley

Committee Members:

Good Morning Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Jessica Olson from Wichita, KS. My Senator is Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau and my Representative is Representative Gail Finney.

I would ask that you pass Senate Bill 43 as it reads because I believe that all eligible Kansas citizens should not only have the right to vote but that it should be made as easy as possible for them to vote regardless of a citizens political affiliation or lack thereof. This bill would go a long way in furthering the insurance that any one who is eligible to vote can do so.

As it stands now there is a prevalent attitude with many of our citizens not only Kansas but through out our country that their individual vote doesn't count, that all legislators are politicians and that all politicians are crooks, liars and do not care about their constituents at all. I know this is not true as I have had the great fortune of having legislators that I can talk to, will meet with me and will listen to my concerns. As I try to get more citizens to participate in the legislative process, I hear over and over that voting doesn't matter. These same citizens believe that the system is already set up for the person that raises the most money to win. They believe that their vote doesn't count and that they don't either. Making it harder for citizens to vote solidifies this belief.

I know that most legislators genuinely care about their constituents and that they want to listen to what they think and feel. Send the public a strong message, that you do care, and that everyone's vote matters, by passing this bill. Show the 18 year old who has never voted before that voting can be as easy as showing up at their polling location. Show them you care and that you value their vote. Show them that our legislative process works and that it is easy to vote. As I worked the polls this last general election, I saw quite a few first time voters. And all of these first time voters were intimidated by the process, but they were proud and excited to vote. I could only imagine how many more first time voters and people who used to vote might show up to the polls if they knew that they could still vote on voting day even though they were not previously registered. How many more people would again have faith in our legislative process if voting became as easy as showing up on voting day.

Other states within the Union have already taken the first step in making it that much easier for their citizens to vote. At least 19 other states have recognized that there is a need and a right to allow same day voter registration, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming, have all decided that their citizens deserve the right to walk into a polling location on voting day and vote regardless of any other condition.

Show Kansans that you care and that their votes matter to you. Show your Kansans citizens that you want them to vote. Show Kansans that they deserve the right to vote no matter who they are, no matter what they believe, and that all that matters is that they are a citizen of the United States and a citizen of Kansas. This should be a non-partisan topic. This should be a topic we can all agree on. Everyone who is eligible should be able to vote on voting day.

Thank You for your time,

Sincerely, Jessica Olson