

February 19, 2019

Dear Senator Bowers and members of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections, and Local Government,

When I voted for the first time in 2016, no one needed to tell me how or when to do it. But the same can't be said for many of my peers. I'm involved in multiple student organizations at the University of Kansas that focus on government and politics, and spent time in the weeks leading up to the most recent midterm elections on Jayhawk Boulevard spreading the word about our on-campus voting location at the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Unfortunately, many of the students who were excited about participating were unable to because they hadn't registered in time, or were registered in their home states and had never requested absentee ballots; often, *they didn't know they were supposed to*. Too many barriers to entry are one of the leading reasons young people don't vote. Among youth 18 and 19 years old who were not registered to vote, 23% said they missed the registration deadlines, 6% said they didn't know where or how to register According to The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

The right to vote for one's government officials is invaluable, but only if all who wish to exercise it are free from the imposition of artificial restraints. And yet every year, Kansans are turned away from the polls because they are not registered to vote. These are often young voters whose enthusiasm is stifled because of an arbitrary deadline. At a time when the process of registering to vote can be completed in minutes, the State of Kansas still requires that registration be completed 20 days prior to the election. With same day registration, we can remove an artificial barrier that inhibits the exercise of such a fundamental right.

Same day voter registration can have a profound effect on turnout: in the 2016 Presidential elections, the top five states in voter turnout have same day voter registration. The average turnout rate for states without same day registration is 53.5%, whereas the average for states with Election Day registration is 49.4%. Kansas is currently at 50.9%, according to the United States Election Project.

Further, the Wisconsin League of Women Voters reports that, when they enacted same day registration in 2016, 380,000 voters registered on Election Day.

Importantly, such an improvement in participation can be achieved with little investment. Costs following initial implementation of the law will vary by county but states that previously implemented it report little to no extra cost.

While a participatory democracy is important, a legitimate democracy is imperative. Same Day Voter Registration would not lead to voter fraud. Under this legislation, new registrants would fill out provisional ballots that are to be verified before being counted. Thus there is no risk to legitimacy of the election.

In this time of low voter turnout and increased apathy among the voting population, it is critical that we encourage engagement on the part of those who wish to be involved, rather than allow an unnecessary restriction to block their participation, thus I support a vote in favor of Senate Bill 43.

Sincerely,
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Deadline Restriction
States

Same Day Registration
States

Alabama	47.2%	California	48.6%
Alaska	54.3%	Colorado	61.5%
Arizona	48.6%	Connecticut	53.8%
Arkansas	41.0%	District of Columbia	42.5%
Delaware	51.0%	Hawaii	38.5%
Florida	54.3%	Idaho	49.4%
Georgia	54.9%	Illinois	50.7%
Indiana	46.4%	Iowa	57.4%
Kansas	50.9%	Maine	59.1%
Kentucky	47.3%	Maryland	53.5%
Louisiana	43.0%	Minnesota	63.9%
Massachusetts	53.7%	Montana	61.4%
Michigan	56.6%	Colorado	61.5%
Mississippi	42.5%	Hawaii	38.5%
Missouri	53.4%	Maryland	53.5%
Nebraska	51.2%	Montana	61.4%
Nevada	47.4%	New Hampshire	54.0%
New Jersey	51.8%	North Carolina	48.7%
New Mexico	47.0%	Utah	51.2%
New York	44.3%	New York	44.3%
North Carolina	48.7%	North Carolina	48.7%
North Dakota	57.8%	Vermont	55.1%
Ohio	50.1%	Washington	58.1%
Oklahoma	42.4%	Wisconsin	61.6%
Oregon	60.0%	Wyoming 48.2%	48.2%
Pennsylvania	51.4%		
Rhode Island	47.5%		
South Carolina	44.7%		
South Dakota	53.0%		
Tennessee	44.6%		
Texas	46.3%		
Virginia	54.6%		
West Virginia	41.7%		

*From the United States Election Project.