

Patricia Lewter, CSJ  
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To: Chairwoman Bowers and members of this committee,  
Regarding: SB 351

Gentle Persons,

My name is Patricia Lewter, of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Concordia. I have only "come home" and been here for almost two years. I have lived out of the state for a little more than fifty years and during that time I had been a registered voter wherever I lived. During the last forty years I have lived in Colorado. Voting was almost automatic for me. We received our ballots via mail and we could mail them or return them personally.

When I went to register to vote I had a hard time knowing what documents I needed and I had to return three times before I had the correct documents for getting a permanent ID and to register. I hoped voting would be easier! And then I joined a group for Citizens' Participation in Our Democracy, with the goal of ensuring that other members of my community would not have as hard a time voting as I had.

I did the necessary study and preparation for being a good and active member of this group. I became almost alarmed at the number of provisional ballots that were not counted in the 2018 elections in Kansas. I became even more alarmed that 80% of those ballots were not counted because of registration errors. Voters simply did not know all the regulations regarding deadline and other technical disqualifiers. Those people presumed that their votes were counted.

I am now living with older women who are educated and who follow the politics of our country. They have lived rich and full lives and even though they have lost some of their mobility, and ability to write clearly, they still have passion for issues that affect them and the people of this state. They want their votes to count! I want mine to count, too!

SB 351, while not perfect in solving every barrier voters face in elections, will give more assurance and trust that our votes will count. I know that you are concerned about the low registration and voter turnout for Kansas and want our ballots to count! We Kansans need to be the leaders in our Democracy.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and we will be watching! We will also be emailing and calling!

Sincerely,  
Sister Patricia Lewter, CSJ