

Representative Blake Carpenter, Chair
Kansas House Elections Committee

Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2326

Prepared by
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Kansas Republican Party 1st Congressional District

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2326, an act concerning elections; regarding precinct committeemen and committeewomen; requiring reporting of certain information to the county clerk.

The 1st Congressional District of Kansas encompasses 63 counties in western and northern Kansas, making it the largest congressional district in the state. As the 1st District Chairwoman for the Kansas Republican Party, I work closely with the County Central Committees in all 63 counties, providing members with information, meeting notices, training, and assistance with special elections.

CHALLENGES WITHOUT HB 2326

- **Incomplete County Party Central Committee Contact Lists.** Currently, there is no requirement for precinct committee people to report phone numbers and email addresses to county clerks when they file to run for their precinct. There is also no requirement for county clerks to disclose this specific data to party officials. Since we are unable to collect this vital information on our elected precinct committee people, our party officers cannot provide effective communication, leaving many precinct committee people out of party correspondence.
- **Deficiencies in Special Elections.** Our district leadership has assisted with endless streams of county-level replacement conventions and most recently the Kansas House District 117 and Kansas Senate District 38 special elections. As we prepare for these replacement conventions, it is imperative we have full contact information for precinct committee people who will be voting. Example: Follow up phone calls were made to precinct committee people during the HD 117 replacement convention when the original election date was postponed. The hosting County Party Central Committee for this special election also called their precinct committee people to take questions and remind the voters to bring their I.D. to the event.

- **Lack of Attendance at Reorganizational Meetings, Trainings, and Events.** The Kansas Republican Party bylaws state that County and District Committees are able to email precinct committee people notices to conventions and party reorganizational meetings. Even though sending mail is an acceptable form of communicating meeting announcements, the County and District Committees face exorbitant costs and challenges with time and labor by sending mail. Without complete contact information being made available, party leadership finds it difficult to notify all precinct committee people for meetings, trainings, and events.

A survey from the KSGOP 1st Congressional District was sent to District Committee Members on 12/16/20. The survey asked members how they preferred being communicated with from the Republican Party. The survey results showed that 95.2% of those that completed the survey said they preferred email communication. 75.3% of those that submitted the survey were precinct committee people. In talking with many of our precinct committee people, they desire and expect communication from the Republican Party so they can be involved.

BENEFITS OF HB 2326

- **Bipartisan Bill.** HB 2326 would benefit both the Republican and Democrat Parties. A major challenge that both political party leaders face is not being able to retrieve full contact information for their precinct committee people.
- **Higher Citizen Engagement.** Grassroots citizens that file to run for their precinct expect communication from their party leaders. They must know what activities, meetings, trainings, and campaign work is available for them to participate in. Most often, when precinct people are connected with their party, they engage and become invaluable to the organization.
- **Fulfilling Statutory and Organizational Duties.** Political parties that lack their members' contact information, find it challenging to accomplish tasks and meet attendance requirements. Precinct committee people are included in the basic structure of the political party and should provide their contact information to party leaders.

Requiring certain contact information from precinct committee people to the county clerk will help streamline special election preparation, connect precinct committee people to their party leaders, and solve communication issues. We urge the committee to pass HB 2326. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.