

Testimony on House Bill 2477

House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Presented by

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Good morning chairman and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee. My name is Forrest Brungardt, I am a junior at Seaman High School and I am here to express my support for HB 2477.

In 2019, United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts said that Americans “take democracy for granted.” We seek to begin remedying his concerns by designating Election Day a state holiday in even numbered years. Every single one of us in this room can agree that voting should be a celebration of democracy; our soldiers fought and died for our freedoms and it would be a great shame to not do everything in our power to honor their wishes. Voting is our civic duty, a duty that millions are unable to perform.

Designating Election Day a holiday isn't just an electoral issue, it's a youth issue. In 2016, 45% of young non-voters stated that they didn't have enough time to cast a ballot. Today we have a chance to change that; with your support of this bill, we can empower thousands of young Kansans and show them that our government supports their right to vote. Everyone should be able to participate in our democracy, and accordingly young people deserve a say in their future.

Furthermore, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission found that two-thirds of jurisdictions had difficulty finding enough poll workers and that, in 2016, a whopping 56% of poll workers were over the age of 61. Designating Election Day a state holiday would allow youth to work at polling places. Many young Kansans would jump at the opportunity to preserve our nation's most precious institution - and maybe make a little money along the way.

To conclude, HB 2477 will make Election Day a state holiday, allowing populations with historically low turnout - especially youth - to express their rights, while easing the nationwide shortage of poll workers.

Thank you.