

## Testimony on House Bill 2477

### House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Presented by

Kevinh Nguyen

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Good morning Chairman Barker and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee. My name is Kevinh Nguyen, I'm a Sophomore student at Seaman High School and I would like to speak briefly in favor of House Bill 2477 and outline the points and relevance of this bill.

Our Civic Engagement club's mission is to encourage students to utilize, present, and develop skills and knowledge through proactive actions such as the proposition of bills and amendments. Our mission closely aligns with the Kansas State Department of Education's own civics mission statement. As an award winning member of the Civic Advocacy Network, Seaman High School is a recognized leader in the area of civic education.

From Sandra Day O'Connor's push for civics education through her iCivics.org online gaming initiative to recent developments in the States of Massachusetts declaring Civics education a priority, the focus is the same. Increase citizens civic knowledge with the hope of increasing governmental participation. We are here as part of that mission. This bill is a product of that mission. HB 2477 would encourage non-voters to participate in our democracy; we must endeavor to support our most crucial institution. Passage of this bill creates a strong first step for the Kansas Government to develop other policies to increase voter turnout and be a leader in civic responsibility.

Similar bills have been passed in states such as West Virginia and New York. What we are proposing today is not radical, many nations around the world have made their elections holidays. However, there is one thing that no one else can claim: Kansas will be the first to pass student-created legislation designating election day a state holiday.

Additionally HB 2477 will encourage civic participation in our elections, including but not limited to: a greater number of poll workers, parents teaching their kids about Election Day, and higher voter turnout. Kansas has long been a leader in expanding democracy; we were one of the first states to give women the right to vote, and we ought to continue that record by once more expanding our democratic process.

It is for the reasons I outlined above that we ask you all to vote in favor of House Bill 2477.

Thank you.