

Chairman Olson and members of the Committee,

My name is Stewart Whitson, and I am a visiting fellow at the Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP). OSP is a non-profit, nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to advancing policies that reduce barriers to work and that promote free and fair elections by making it easy to vote, but hard to cheat.

Thank you for hearing this legislation before your committee. I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 388.

There is much to like in this bill.

SB 388 would require a voter (or an individual on the voter's behalf) returning an advance voting ballot to personally deliver the ballot to the county election officer or to return the ballot by mail through the United States Postal Service. The intent of SB 388 is sound, as it ensures that ballots are returned through a federal mail system or by physically dropping a ballot off inside of the election office.

These reforms are surely a step in the right direction when it comes to limiting the use of ballot drop boxes and inspiring voter confidence in the integrity of Kansas's elections.

Without a doubt, offering drop boxes with no real security or oversight would be easier for election officials and easier for voters, but the duty of the Kansas Legislature is not only to pass laws that make it easier to vote, but to also institute fair and commonsense measures that make it harder to cheat, while inspiring confidence in Kansas voters that all legally cast ballots are counted.

This bill takes a big step in the right direction, and the Opportunity Solutions Project supports SB 388 and appreciates Senator Hilderbrand for introducing this legislation.

Thank you for your time.

Stewart Whitson,
OSP Visiting Fellow
