



Senate Bill 389

Senate Federal and State Affairs

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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 389.

As the fiscal note explains, SB 389 would require all voting systems used in the state to use an individual, durable, voter-verified paper ballot with a distinctive watermark established by the Kansas Office of the Secretary of State. The bill outlines requirements that would relate to the use and handling of the ballot; counting of the ballot; voting system and equipment specifications; when a hand recount would be required; and audit requirements for election boards as well as other requirements related to processes and procedures.

By passing SB 389, Kansas would join a list of other states such as California and Tennessee which utilize common sense solutions that make it easy to vote, but importantly, difficult to cheat. Watermarks are often used with passports and other official forms of documentation and its use in Kansas would make it easy for a poll worker to quickly determine a fraudulent ballot from an official.

Without a doubt, SB 389 is focused on ensuring that the integrity of Kansas elections are conducted in a fair and transparent manner. As noted in my testimony in support of SB 388 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 – SB 389 does just that.

This bill takes a big step in the right direction, and the Opportunity Solutions Project supports SB 389 and appreciates Senator Hilderbrand for introducing this legislation.

Thank you for your time.

Stewart Whitson,
OSP Visiting Fellow
