

SCOTT SCHWAB
Secretary of State



Memorial Hall, 1st Floor
120 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1594
(785) 296-4564
sos.ks.gov

STATE OF KANSAS

January 24, 2024

Testimony on HB2512 (Oral Neutral)

House Committee on Elections
Thursday, January 25, 2024

Chairman Proctor and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 2512. Our office is neutral on this legislation but wishes to provide background and raise some concerns.

Background: Under current law, counties must provide in-person voting up to noon on the Monday before election day. The Monday before election day is, therefore, hectic given that county election offices must not only conduct in-person voting but must also assemble and transport election equipment and supplies to polling places, finalize staffing requirements, and ensure the poll books that will be used at election day polling places are updated with all votes cast in-person or received by mail on Monday.

In 2023, the legislature, to alleviate the congestion at some county election offices caused by voters arriving to vote while trucks were being loaded with polling place supplies and departing, amended the law to no longer require that Monday in-person voting occur at the county election office.

HB 2512 could potentially allow county election office's more time to focus on election day preparation than advance early in person voting on the Monday before election day. This could remove the burden of processing voters on Monday and may reduce the chances of inadvertent errors.

Concerns: The change could cause confusion with those voters who routinely vote on the Monday before election day and were not aware of the change. Also, if counties, in response to the bill, chose to conduct early in-person voting on Sunday before the election, it would increase staffing costs.

We were not clear how the cutoff of "not later than 7:00 p.m. on the second day preceding the date of the election" would affect mail ballots transmitted by drop box and mail ballots dropped off at polling places on election day.

Sincerely,

Clayton L. Barker
Deputy Secretary of State, General Counsel
Office of the Kansas Secretary of State
clay.barker2@ks.gov