



Shawnee County Commissioner of Elections

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Andrew Howell
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Written Testimony Proponent, SB 221
Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

My name is Andrew Howell and I am the Election Commissioner for Shawnee County, Kansas. The mission of our office is to honestly, fairly and according to law administer elections for all voters, and to accurately report the results in a timely manner.

The Shawnee County Election Office is in strong support of SB 221. This bill provides improved guidance to counties on how we should adjudicate write-ins for certain races in all 105 counties and has the potential to save County Clerks and Election Commissioners throughout the state time and money.

County Clerks and Election Commissioners have limited budgets for elections, and I believe that this bill can help save them significant time and resources. Additionally, smaller counties that may struggle to find bi-partisan boards or have limited staff for the adjudication process can benefit from this bill. In many races from the top to the bottom of the ballot every year our office adjudicates thousands of write-ins that very seldom have any impact on the race. The process currently costs our office thousands of dollars and typically takes many hours to complete.

The bill lays out a process that candidates may utilize if they would like their write-in votes to count. This allows election officers to be more efficient in processing and compiling write-ins allowing offices to save money and resources. This can allow election offices to put time and resources in other parts of the office to ensure transparency and efficiency when running elections.

Lastly, we are in support of this bill because it does not impact write-ins for smaller offices or jurisdictions. SB 221 only deals with offices that report to GEC. All other positions would have their write-ins adjudicated as they are currently. School boards, cities of the second and third class, precinct committee persons, townships, and special districts such as drainage, cemetery, etcetera will not be impacted by this bill.

The Shawnee County Election Office requests the committee supports SB 221, which would have positive impact on election offices all over the state. County Election Officials have many existing and new state requirements every election, and this would help reduce the burden on budgetary resources, and personnel constraints.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew Howell