

Date:03/16/2022

Bill number: HB2086

Indicate Disposition: Proponent, **Opponent** or Neutral

Testimony Type: In-person

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee,

I'm here to oppose HB2086. A bill geared to "clean up" should not be 54 pages long. Furthermore, we all heard the Secretary of State's office repeatedly tell us that our elections are safe and secure. Either that is true and this bill is unnecessary or we have a problem and granting the SOS's office more power is an egregious mistake.

I have serious concerns with granting the SOS additional power while simultaneously stripping power from the people he/she serves. We currently have laws on the books that when violated have no consequences. Our current SOS took advantage of these in our last election by directing county clerks to not rotate his name with his opponents despite rules to the contrary. No consequences for this behavior and an eye on the governor's office have emboldened him. What happens when someone else holds this position? Maybe someone not aligned with you.

A government closest to the people governs best. Why would the SOS's office seek to remove the ability to ensure the integrity of the elections by eliminating local officials' ability to preserve and protect the data on the electronic equipment? Is there some reason they want to eliminate the possibility of anyone not personally authorized by the SOS(or any future SOS) from opening the machines for examination? Why would the SOS's office seek to further distance poll agents, making their ability to observe more difficult? Who would want LESS transparency? Why?

Precinct people are the grassroots of our political system. Many elected officials would not be elected without having to hire people to do the work these precinct people freely offer. Now the SOS's office wants to eliminate their right to be poll agents. This is a valuable service to our candidates and to our election system. This is the opposite of transparency. Why?

The law already requires a person state their address and party affiliation and have it notarized in order to run for a precinct position. A county chair can *already* appoint people when the need arises due to a vacancy. Why would the State Chair object if a person meets these qualifications? Isn't that the choice of the *people* in that precinct? This is another example of how this bill attempts to seize power from the people.

At a time when many voters are concerned about election integrity, a bill that takes power from the people and gives it to a single elected official smacks of deceit, secrecy and intentional obscurity. Where are the checks and balances? This seems like the opposite of integrity.

Perhaps our elections aren't as secure as we have been led to believe if we need to write extensive bills designed to circumvent the people. More power at the top and less with the grassroots is not how this country was founded and is a slap in the face to those boots on the ground working to get their candidates elected and keep our local communities, state and county great.

I urge you to vote NO on HB2086.

Sincerely,

Maria Holiday
Current Chair of the Johnson County Republican Party
7647 Hemlock St.
Overland Park, KS 66204