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Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections & Local Government
Hearing on Senate Bill 211
February 21, 2013
Statement by Dick Carter, Jr.

Good afternoon Chairman Pyle and members of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections & Local Government. My name is Dick Carter, and I appear before you today on behalf of the Mayor and 12 elected city council members of Overland Park.

The City of Overland Park opposes SB 211, which would move local elections to the fall of evenly numbered years and make them partisan. Historically, municipal and local elections have been held in the spring. We believe that moving local elections to the fall would only frustrate and confuse voters, with candidates and issues vying for state level office.

Frequently in local elections there are ordinance changes or other questions on the ballot. It would be a mistake to blend multiple local candidates to the mix, in addition to sometimes lengthy worded ballot measures.

Another important factor to consider is that there appears to be no significant fiscal savings by moving all elections to the fall. If there was a demonstrated fiscal prudence, certainly a review of consolidating elections to a single season of the year would be merited, but we believe that not to be the case here.

This is not a situation where a "one-size fits all" solution works best. Most issues at the local level do not follow a partisan ideology. We respectfully request that you oppose SB 211 and maintain the current system of non-partisan, municipal elections held in the spring of odd-numbered years.