

SESSION OF 2015

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2185

As Amended by House Committee on Elections

Brief*

HB 2185 would require all unified school districts (USDs) to make available suitable school buildings for polling places, when requested by the county election officer for the county in which all or a portion of the USD is located. The county election officer would be required to give at least 365 days' notice to the USD superintendent, and USDs that have been so notified could schedule an inservice day for teachers on the day of election.

Background

The bill was requested by the House Committee on Elections. In the House Committee, the Johnson County Election Commissioner testified in favor of the bill, saying he had long advocated creation of a teacher inservice day to allow schools as polling places. The Commissioner provided a comparison between the 2004 presidential election, where 102 (or 36 percent of Johnson County's 286) polling places were in schools, to the November 2014 election, where only 4 polling places (or 2 percent of the total) were in schools. He said the primary reason for the loss in school polling places has been security issues in the wake of the 2013 Sandy Hook, New Jersey school shootings. Providing for an inservice day, he said, would ensure children were out of the buildings on election days.

A representative of the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) testified in opposition to the bill. He said

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

KASB opposed the two mandates present in the bill as introduced, those being mandatory provision of school buildings upon request and the mandate of an inservice day in any USD on any election day where a USD building is used as a polling place.

There was no neutral testimony on the bill.

The House Committee amended the bill to make optional the scheduling of an inservice day. The Committee also increased, from 60 to 365 days, the amount of notice a county election officer must provide a USD when notifying the superintendent a school building will be needed as a polling place.

The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, indicates the bill would have no fiscal effect on the state budget. Any additional costs from using school buildings as polling places would be absorbed by USDs.