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Written Testimony to Senate Committee on Federal & State Affairs

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BILL NUMBER: SB 388 BILL DESCRIPTION: Requiring the use of USPS for ballot return

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL TESTIMONY OR WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY: Written

Dear committee members, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 388 that results in a ban on ballot drop boxes.

I have used the ballot drop box nearest to me for the past couple of elections and have found it to be preferable to US Mail. While I fully support our mail system, I have had several occurrences recently where mailed letters/packages have been delayed for a long period of time due to weather or, more likely, periodic surges in the volume of mail being sent. This certainly happened with my holiday cards and will, during a busy election season, be at risk of occurring again. Being able to drop my advanced ballot in the dropbox at my library gave me peace of mind. I could see that within 48 hours, my ballot had been received.

Advanced voting and drop boxes provide flexibility for voters who find it difficult to vote in person due to time and/or physical constraints. SB 388 effectively adds a layer of difficulty in returning an advanced ballot. Requiring US Mail also makes it such that a person who votes in advance is effectively paying an extra fee of a US postage stamp in order to vote. Even if this is not a hardship financially, it requires that a person make it to the post office during Postal hours or have a credit card to make an online purchase of postage. These hurdles may seem small, but they add an additional layer of difficulty in voting. My husband leaves for work when it is dark and gets home after dark. Knowing that he can drop his ballot in the ballot box in our community at anytime makes it possible for him to be sure his ballot is received without making special accommodations. I hope that our KS legislature will work to make sure that voting is as easy as possible. This bill seems to unduly add a layer of time and financial burden on the voter.

Again, I ask that you oppose bill SB 388. Thank you for your consideration,

Jennifer Ancell