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STATE OF KANSAS

Testimony on HB2053 (Oral Proponent)

House Committee on Elections

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

Chairman Proctor and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 2053. This bill authorizes the Secretary of State to issue regulations on the use of remote ballot drop boxes by Kansas county election officials.

In 1978, the legislature authorized county election officials to determine means, other than mail delivery, to receive advance by mail ballots: “the ballot envelope shall be mailed *or otherwise transmitted* to the county election officer” (K.S.A. 25-1124(a)). Remote ballot drop boxes serve as a secure method for voters to return their advance by mail ballot promptly and efficiently.

Currently, the Secretary of State is limited to providing counties with recommendations on the use of remote ballot drop boxes. HB2053 would permit the Secretary of State to ensure all counties have standard practices and security measures, attainable by all counties. Our office has assembled a collection of best practices compiled from government and non-governmental entities, regulations from other states, and lessons learned from previous elections.

Kansas elections are conducted at the local level within a statutory framework. Remote ballot drop boxes have proved to be a beneficial and secure method offered by county election officers for the return of advance by mail ballots. This bill would ensure remote ballot boxes continue to be a viable option for county use.

We respectfully request the passage of HB2053.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

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