

March 6, 2023

Testimony to the House Elections Committee

NAME: Stephen Pantos

TITLE: Shawnee Co. Volunteer Election Worker & League of Women Voters member, Ward 10 Democratic Precinct Committee Person, Retired USCIS Immigration Officer Supervisor

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BILL NUMBER: SB 209, removal of three day voter protection/grace period

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & members of the committee, Rep. Kirk Haskins,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 209 – Removal of the three-day voter protection/grace period.

I oppose SB209 because nothing has changed since 2017 to make it unreasonable and ineffective in providing an informed electorate the opportunity to cast their ballots. Kansans don't need election results the same day as the election. Kansans need election results that arise from free and fair elections.

Others will document that mail delays have gotten worse since the legislature enacted the three-day grace period in 2017. If more voters are forced to use the mail because ballot drop boxes are no longer available then the three days will remain vital to Kansas democracy.

Kansas voters already face serious time constraints because there is no Voter Election Pamphlet with candidate statements and positions. Kansans are forced to rely upon local news media, television advertisements and candidate mailers. Gone is the opportunity to view and listen to candidates from both major parties. In Shawnee County one party's candidates failed to make appearances at non-partisan candidates' night events. Others failed to respond to requests by local newspapers for biographies and position statements. No wonder Kansas voters often wait until the last minute so they can get their own research done and cast an informed ballot.

I would just add that in 2020 I delivered my 90 year old mother's ballot to the drop box at the Shawnee County parking lot because my sister and I, both in our 70's, thought our 68 year old brother had already timely mailed our mother's ballot. In 2020 we mailed ours because we were in a high risk group for Covid-19. In 2018 I volunteered to help pick up and to deliver ballots from aged and disabled voters who, for a variety of circumstances, failed to timely mail their ballots. I felt the same pride doing that as I did when I gave the Oath of Allegiance to the United States to new citizens as the Master of Ceremonies at Naturalization Ceremonies of the USCIS Atlanta Field Office.

Take some of that surplus we hear so much about and publish a Voter Election Pamphlet. Charge candidates and supporters to publish their statements and positions. It will cost the taxpayers very little and more voters will cast timely ballots in person or by mail. Vote No on SB 209

Stephen Pantos, Topeka

[your name]

[city]

[Save as a .pdf file, and attach to your email – see Email Instructions)