

Legislative Testimony

In Opposition of HB2572
House Committee on Elections
February 8th, 2024

[WRITTEN ONLY]

Dear Chairman Proctor and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rashane Hamby and I am the Director of Policy and Research at the American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas. The ACLU of Kansas is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization with more than 35,000 supporters across Kansas that works to preserve and strengthen the civil rights and liberties of every person in our state. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB2572 because according to the 2022 EAVS Data Brief for Kansas, the state's mail ballot system's efficiency and integrity, stands as a significant testament against HB2572's proposed restrictions¹. With an admirable mail ballot return rate and a minimal rejection rate, Kansas showcases a system that not only works but flourishes under current regulations. The following statistics underline the potential risks of HB2572 in hampering voter participation and complicating a process that evidence shows is both secure and accessible, particularly for those reliant on mail-in voting for their democratic participation.

Unnecessary Restrictions on Ballot Delivery: The high return rate of mail ballots (85.9%) in Kansas demonstrates the system's accessibility and reliability, essential for those with limited access to polling places. The proposed restrictions could hinder this effective system, disproportionately affecting the elderly, disabled, and rural residents.

Potential for Voter Disenfranchisement: With 96.4% of returned mail ballots counted and only 1.1% rejected, the current system shows a high degree of accuracy in signature verification, minimizing disenfranchisement risks. Stricter measures could unnecessarily reject valid votes.

Excessive Penalization: The statistics indicate that the vast majority of ballots are returned and counted successfully, suggesting that the current penalties are sufficient to maintain integrity without deterring assistance.

Inhibits Civic Engagement: The successful handling of mail ballots, as evidenced by the high acceptance rate, supports a system that encourages participation. Restricting assistance could deter this positive engagement.

Undermines Trust in the Electoral Process: The data reflects a system that effectively balances accessibility with security, fostering trust in the electoral process. Introducing complex and punitive measures could undermine this trust and reduce voter participation.

In light of the data from the 2022 EAVS Data Brief for Kansas, it's evident that the state's existing mail ballot system embodies a balance of accessibility and security, serving as a cornerstone for democratic participation. HB2572, with its restrictive measures, risks undermining this balance, potentially

¹ U.S. Election Assistance Commission. (2023). *2022 EAVS Data Brief: Kansas* [PDF].
https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-10/2022_EAVS_Data_Brief_KS_508c.pdf

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disenfranchising voters and eroding trust in the electoral process. The statistics and outcomes highlighted from Kansas's experience should guide us toward policies that enhance, rather than restrict, voter engagement and trust in our electoral system.

For the reasons listed above, I urge you, please vote no on HB2572.

Rashane Hamby
Director of Policy and Research