



Dale Goter
Government Relations Manager

TESTIMONY

City of Wichita
455 N Main, Wichita, KS. 67202
Wichita Phone: 316.352.4876
dgoter@wichita.gov

**Kansas House Elections Committee
Hearing on HB2271 Local Elections
Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2013
Dale Goter, Government Relations Manager, City of Wichita**

Chairman Schwab and members of the committee:

The City of Wichita opposes any state legislative effort to mandate the timing and partisanship of local elections.

The format for local elections is best left to the local officials who are closest to the electorate. The option of scheduling elections for either fall or spring in even or odd numbered years is currently within the authority of a local governing body. If the local electorate was clamoring for such a change, local elected officials would be the first to hear about it, and would respond accordingly.

No such public outcry has been registered, and the City of Wichita is comfortable with the current format of non-partisan elections conducted in the spring of odd-numbered years.

It is important to remember that Kansas local government is considered a national model for its emphasis on good government and the absence of partisan influence on the local level. The introduction of partisan politics into local government issues will only polarize local elected officials and create artificial limits on policy debates.

The everyday demands of local government,, providing basic services such as public safety and transportation, do not lend themselves to partisan politics. As Wichita City Council Member Pete Meitzner noted, "There is no Republican or Democratic way to fix a pothole."

It also is worth noting that our county election office has struggled to meet the obligations of the current fall election schedule. Adding a host of other local elections to the ballot would further strain the limited capabilities of the Sedgwick County Election Office.