



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

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Oral Neutral Testimony

on

SB 7, Moving school board officer elections and organizations from July to January

by

Patrick Woods, President, Kansas Association of School Boards

February 6, 2019

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am C. Patrick Woods, a member of the Topeka USD 501 Board of Education and the President of the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB). Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of KASB as neutral on **SB 7**, which would move school board officer elections from July to January. It also allows local boards of education to designate their own date for those elections following organizational meetings early in the calendar year.

This bill had its genesis in the unintended consequences following the enactment of the law that moved school board and city commission elections from April of odd-numbered years to November of even-numbered years. Prior to the enactment of that law, school board members were elected in April and assumed office at the first meeting in July; statute directs that the organizational meeting and election of officers take place at that time.

Under the new election system, board members are elected in November and take office in January; however, the statutory mandate for the July organizational meeting and officers election has not been changed. As a result, some boards saw one or more of their incumbent officers defeated in the November 2018 election, resulting in a variety of board and community reactions to those officers' "lame duck" status. While some boards were able to navigate this transition smoothly, others found it difficult.

KASB consulted its members about this issue throughout the summer and fall in regional meetings across the state. Due to varying responses by local boards, our organization does not have specific legislative policy on the election date of board officers. We do, however, strongly support the doctrine of local control and appreciate SB 7 providing for local designation of a date for election of officers, following an organizational meeting in January or early February.

For these reasons, KASB appears as neutral on SB 7. Thank you, and I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.