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February 14, 2019

Honorable Kansas State Senator Elaine Bowers  
Chair, Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Re: Senate Bill 131, Concerning Election Filing Dates & Township Officer Oaths

Chairman Bowers and Distinguished Committee Members,

As Ford County Clerk and Election Officer, I thank you for your time in allowing me to testify as a proponent of this bill.

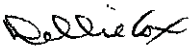
This bill adequately addresses some issues that remained after statutory changes were made a few years ago affecting filing deadlines and oaths for elected officials.

The first part of this bill pertains to changing the candidate filing deadline for officers of municipalities such as extension districts, and drainage districts, where a primary election is not needed or required, I believe changing the date from September 1, to the day before the primary elect, would allow county election officers to begin producing the ballots for the General Election in November. The current September 1 deadline causes county election officers to wait until after that date to begin producing the ballots for the General Election in November; September 1 is approximately 65 days prior to the November election date. That leaves the county election officers with around 20 days to produce ballots to transmit to military and overseas voters, which are required to be sent out 45 days prior to each election.

The second part of this bill addresses when township officers shall take and subscribe the oath of office for the position they were elected to in the November general election. These officers are currently required to take the oath for their office within 20 days of being elected even though they do not take office until the second Monday in January like all other state, county, and local officers. These oaths for township officers should be administered upon taking office like other elected offices.

I support passing SB 131 in its current form.

Sincerely,

  
Debbie Cox

Ford County Clerk/Election Officer