

January 27, 2021

To the Committee chair and the other distinguished members of the House Committee on Election.

Much concern surrounds House Bill No. 2054. At a time when questions and concerns have been raised over voter suppression, I feel inclined to petition this committee in a good faith attempt to advise this committee against the unfair nature of HB-2054. Representing over twenty thousand Kansans, I feel it my fiduciary obligation to give voice to this important matter. HB-2054 will no doubt negatively impact thousands of voters across the state of Kansas. Particularly the elderly who have difficulty applying for a ballot, voting in person, filling out their ballots without help and returning those ballots.

Given the inherent challenges of voting, complicating voting would be counterproductive to our democratic process. We live in a society where we value free and fair elections. This constitutional right should not be impeded by partisan politics. This country has had a history of restricting voter rights and access to the ballot box. In no way should HB-2054 become another impediment for Kansas voters. The elderly and poor have many disadvantages that hinder their ability to vote, to add another would be egregious, nonsensical and destructive to our democratic voting process. Legislation that works for the people should seek to make voting easier not harder. It was Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont who said and I quote "**Voter suppression today is alive and well in the form of unnecessary voter ID laws, restrictions on registering to vote, improper purging of voter rolls, felon disenfranchisement, and a staggering array of deceptive practices that are preventing eligible voters from participating in the political process.**" The sentiments shared by Senator Sanders should be shared by all who are in position to transform our voting laws. I would only hope that each of you had the courage to chose the people of Kansas over partisan party politics.

On behalf of my constituents, I am asking this committee to consider the implications of HB-2054, should it be passed into law. Our past history of voter suppression in this country demands that legislation support a fair voting process. When everyone is able to vote without unnecessary restrictions, we all win. Democracy wins. Voting is democratic and therefore we should have constructive and considerate legislation that both assures and ensures the sacredness and simplicity of the voting process. I categorically reject the premise for HB-2054 and ask that this bill be amended in order to reflect the voter's interest. I implore each of you to help preserve the integrity of our voting process. Say no to HB-2054. It's bad legislation. It's bad for Kansas. It's bad for our democratic process.

Humbly Submitted,

Terrance La Mont Holder

Dr. Terrance La Mont Holder, Th.D., President
Missionary Baptist State Convention of Kansas