



Kansas PTA
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Testimony to Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections

Honorable Chairman, Senator Mitch Holmes
Darla Conner, Committee Assistant, 785-296-7667
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Hearing: Wednesday, February 11, 2015, 9:30 am, 142-S

Testimony Kansas PTA OPPOSE [SB171](#) – Local Partisan Elections Mega Bill

Chairman Holmes and Committee Members,

Please accept this written testimony from Kansas PTA to convey our deep concerns for and opposition to the scope and nature of changes to local election law, as proposed in SB 171 – Municipal Elections.

The proposition to make school board elections partisan in and of itself is in direct conflict with Kansas PTA non-partisan platform, as well as an inappropriate and unnecessary policy change. The 54 page length of this bill in conjunction with a less than 24 hour turn around for testimony taps the bandwidth of our volunteer members to respond as thoroughly as this bill is problematic.

Nonetheless, our initial concerns are sufficient enough to warrant Kansas PTA opposition:

- Making school board elections partisan
- Changing the transition of new school board members to mid-school year
- Excluding military personnel from municipal public service
- Lengthening election ballots and additional to the information voters need to inform themselves about prior to election day
- Moving other elections for cities and school district officials to the fall and making the elections partisan;
- Moving community college trustee elections to the fall;
- Moving all primaries to August; and
- Adding an unfunded mandate that require all school districts make “suitable” school buildings available for polling places and paid inservice on the same day.

We urge this committee to oppose SB171.

Tammy Bartels, Kansas PTA President

Kansas PTA is a nonpartisan association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities.

Kansas PTA Platform,

Legislative Priority 1. Kansas PTA will support efforts to strengthen and improve the Kansas public school finance system, which includes legislation and policies that:

- a. uphold Kansas Constitutional obligations to make suitable provision for the finance of the Kansas public schools that is equitable for every child.
- b. restore recent state cuts to base state aid per pupil, back to levels comparable to those deemed suitable by the legislature - actual costs identified in research studies requested and authorized by the Kansas legislature (e.g., Legislative Post Audit 2006 Cost Study).
- c. pursue solutions to fully fund state and federal educational mandates, including the new uniform financial accounting and reporting act, without disproportionately shifting the burden to local communities.

Legislative Priority 2. Kansas PTA will support efforts to restore an equitable and balanced tax policy to maintain a reliable revenue stream for public education. A policy which draws upon a combination of income, property and sales taxes has been proven by history to be a secure and sustainable approach. Kansas PTA opposes provisions limiting the growth of government before public education is fully funded to the statutory levels..

National PTA believes home schools and other nonpublic schools should meet the same educational standards as public schools.