



Kansas PTA
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on behalf of Kansas PTA President, Tammy Bartels
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February 17, 2023

Testimony to Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Honorable Chairman, Senator Mike Thompson
Sheila Wodtke, Committee Assistant
Sheila.Wodtke@senate.ks.gov, 785-296-4335
Hearing: Monday, February 20, 2023, 10:30 am, 144-S

**Written only Testimony Kansas PTA
Opposed [SB210](#)– Local Partisan Elections**

Chairman Thompson and Committee Members,

Please accept this belated written testimony from Kansas PTA to convey our deep concerns for and opposition to the proposed changes to local election law in SB 210 – partisan local elections.

Public education is a non-partisan institution and should remain as such. The proposition to add party affiliation to the name of local school board candidates and other local offices on the ballot, functionally establishes partisan municipal elections. This change is inappropriate and unnecessary, as well as, in direct conflict with [Kansas PTA non-partisan platform](#).

Education is a fundamental service that should be provided to all students regardless of their political affiliation or beliefs. By making school board elections partisan, it may undermine the focus on education and shift it towards political interests, rather than the best interests of students.

Partisan elections can become divisive and lead unnecessary conflicts, polarization and gridlock, which can ultimately harm students and the quality of education. In some cases, partisan school board elections can lead to a lack of diversity on the school board and an inadequate representation of the needs and interests of all students. Further, partisan elections may undermine the credibility of the school board and create the perception of bias. This can ultimately harm the trust that parents, teachers and community members have in the school board and the decisions it makes.

Non-partisan school board elections allow the focus to remain on education and student outcomes rather than political ideology. We urge this committee to oppose SB 210. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Brooke Burkett, VP of Advocacy
Devin Wilson, Legislative Liaison, Kansas PTA Advocacy Team

THE PTA POSITION. *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. [PTA mission and purpose](#) have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child's potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.*