

Filling Congressional Vacancies; HB 2017

HB 2017 amends KSA Chapter 25, Article 35, dealing with filling congressional vacancies.

The bill changes the minimum number of signatures of registered voters required for an independent candidate to petition for nomination to fill a congressional vacancy to 3,000. Previous law required an independent candidate to submit a number of signatures equal to 4 percent of qualified voters in the congressional district. The bill states such petitions may not be circulated for signatures until after the date of the election is proclaimed by the Governor.

The bill changes the requirements for which political parties are required to call a district convention in the case of a congressional vacancy. The bill requires each political party that has obtained official recognition to call a convention. Under previous law, each political party whose candidate for governor received not less than 5 percent of the votes cast at the next preceding election of the governor was required to call a district convention in the event of a vacancy.

The bill adjusts related time frames to conform to federal overseas voter ballot requirements and makes additional conforming changes, as outlined below:

- Modifies the time frame within which the election must be held to fill a congressional vacancy from 45 to 60 days to 75 to 90 days after the Governor proclaims the date of the election (KSA 25-3502);
- Modifies the time frame within which a congressional district convention of the district party of each officially recognized political party must be called by the state chairperson of each such party from “at least 25 days” after the proclamation is issued to between 15 and 25 days after issuance of the proclamation (KSA 25-3504);
- Moves the day on which the county boards of canvassers must meet from the second to the third day following the election;
- Moves the day on which the state board of canvassers must meet from the fourth to the sixth day following the election; and
- Makes additional technical and conforming changes.

The provisions of the bill took effect January 1, 2017 (the bill is effective upon publication in the *Kansas Register*).