



House Elections Committee
Chair, Rep. Blake Carpenter
Hearing: February 16, 2021

Position – OPPOSE HB 2319

Chair Carpenter, and Members of the Committee,

The Mainstream Coalition opposes HB 2319, shortening the deadline for the return of advance voting ballots. This bill would change the deadline for receipt of mailed advance ballots from *three days* after the election, to 5 pm on the *next day* after the election. And yet, it does not change the requirement that advance ballots be postmarked on or before the close of polls on the date of the election.

It would seem then that the intent of this bill is to allow voters to cast their mail in ballots up to and including election day, but prevent any that do not manage to get delivered in less than 24 hours from being counted. There are any number of circumstances where this bill would clearly prevent the exercise of the right to vote, which is central to our democracy. Imagine a weather event in early November that causes a delay in the postal mail. The current three day period would allow a storm to pass, and ballots to be delivered in time. But a period of less than 24 hours would severely depress the number of ballots that could be delivered in a storm, depriving Kansas voters of their right to have their votes counted.

Not only that, but a provision in this bill would make it impossible for anyone in a position of authority (an elected or appointed officer, or a court) to change this requirement to combat unforeseen circumstances.

It remains unclear what problem this bill is solving. We just completed an election with record ballots by mail, and Secretary of State Scott Schwab declared there were no instances of voter fraud in Kansas.

To put it simply, this is a bill looking for a problem, and one that would instead disenfranchise Kansas voters. We urge you to please oppose passage of HB 2319.

Thank you,

Michael Poppa
Executive Director of the Mainstream Coalition
michael@mainstreamcoalition.org

Founded in 1993, the Mainstream Coalition is a nonpartisan nonprofit that advocates for common sense public policy in Kansas. Our members do more than vote.