

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Special Elections Committee,

As an individual concerned with the security of elections in our state and across the country, I have spent much of my free time the past 2 years observing and learning the election processes in Sedgwick County. I have also watched committee hearings on several election bills.

With regard to the Election Security, Part 2 – Post Audit Report. I apologize for the length of this point, but the explanation is important. During the hearing Senator Tyson questioned the first section on page 12 of the report with respect to the words “at least half the practices” and that this was a low bar considering they received an evaluation in the 50-100% level. The presenter, Andy from LPA, responded “so the question was whether they were, they had adequate policies and practices so we had to come up with some definition of adequacy which is not in state law. So these practices, we determined that if they were following half of them, in other words, in any given area if they had at least half of the best practices in place we thought that was adequate. And the reason for that is because most of these things, there’s very, only eight of them were of the best practices from the EAC are fully reflected in state law. Three of them are partially reflected and then five of them that we reviewed are actually from state law originally, so most of the stuff is not in state law, it’s not in administrative regulations. Before we came along, no one formally told them that they had to be doing these things and so we thought that if they were doing them at least halfway so to speak that was, that was adequate. Here is the link if you wish to watch. <https://www.youtube.com/live/g-6rZWn26Dk?si=UhOZCYA-9DRcXHWj> time stamp 33:01 – 34:15

I understand that a determination of “adequate” was necessary and the statute provided no guidance, but 50% is too low for an event that is vital to our nation. The audit revealed counties have many practices in place, but they are also missing or have weak practices in several important areas...and that is with an adequacy level of 50%. The legislature needs to provide direction and high standards to ensure the security of our elections. Yes, every county in Kansas has different needs, but standards must exist and compliance be verified to protect the vote of every legitimate voter in the state.

If the election clerks/commissioners were not told that they should be doing these things, then that is on the Secretary of State’s office. I find the SOS’s response humorous as his claim to election controls always seems dependent upon the situation. If it is beneficial to the SOS, then the responsibility lies with him, but if it’s not beneficial, then it’s the county’s problem. In Sedgwick County we hear “all we control is the election budget.” Maybe the legislators should take control and solve the issue once and for all.

My understanding is the SOS’s office launched a certification training program for our county election officers which began this year. I would suggest the training is reviewed by the auditors to establish the training includes all areas which were lacking according to the audit findings.

Another Legislative Post Audit which was reported on at the same time as Part 2 of the Election Audit was a review of information systems and specific IT security controls. The report abstract is on the following page. Granted the report states that local entities are not required to follow the state’s policies. However, the low level of compliance, 9 of 15 failures in one area, is concerning and leads one to wonder if the compliance level for election offices would be any better if they were required to follow the state’s policies. This is extremely alarming.



Information Systems: Reviewing Specific IT Security Controls Across State Agencies and School Districts

Report Abstract

This audit determined whether selected state agencies and school districts adequately complied with certain IT security standards and best practices. State agencies must follow state IT security standards to protect sensitive information against data loss and theft. Local entities are not required to follow the state's policies. 9 of 15 entities we audited did not substantively comply with IT standards and best practices in at least 2 of 3 subject areas we evaluated. Specifically, 8 of 15 entities did not substantively comply with selected security awareness training controls. 10 of 15 entities did not substantively comply with selected account security controls. Lastly, 8 of 15 did not substantively comply with selected incident response controls. The findings demonstrate a poor "tone at the top" at many entities--meaning lack of top management oversight and supervision..

In closing, I find it sad when legislation is presented to strengthen the protections for each, and every person's vote, and it is met with arguments of disenfranchisement and voter suppression. Election interference affects candidates from both parties. All I want is for the vote, of every person who has the legal right to vote, to be secure and to be counted once and only once and as one full vote. Not a three quarters vote, or a one and one quarter vote, but one vote. I have no desire to make it difficult for anyone to vote. But we must remove all opportunities that exist which might harm the value of every legal vote. I would hope, regardless of party, that the members of this committee and the rest of the legislature would want that as well.

Thank you for your time and for holding this special committee on election. I look for many good things to come from this.

Kari Sue Vosburgh
Sedgwick County Precinct Committeewoman