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TO: Chairman Scott Schwab, Vice-Chairman Mario Goico, Ranking Minority Member, Ann Mah, Standing Committee on Elections

RE: HB 2423, AN ACT concerning municipalities; relating to political campaign yard signs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 2423.

Political speech is the most protected form of speech in the United States. Without it, citizens cannot participate freely in their own governance. As lawmakers it is our duty to guard against restrictions that prevent any Kansan from expressing political opinions as they see fit.

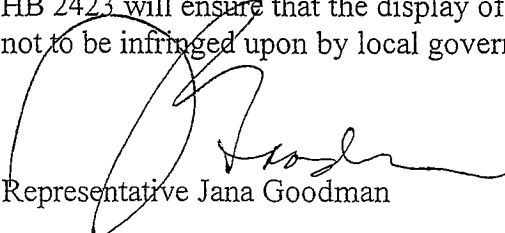
Currently, a number of cities and counties have enacted various regulations on political yard signs. For example, in my home county of Leavenworth, the cities of Lansing and Leavenworth border each other but have quite different political sign restrictions:

Leavenworth: less than 5 sq ft; 6 weeks before the election to 2 weeks after
Lansing: less than 8 sq ft; 4 weeks before the election to 1 week after

HB 2423 will override any such restrictions formulated by municipalities in Kansas on private residential property, thereby protecting freedom of political speech for Kansas citizens.

In 2008, the legislature overwhelmingly enacted statute K.S.A. 58-3820 to render homeowner covenants which prohibit the display of political yard signs, "which are less than six square feet, during a period commencing 45 days before an election and ending two days after the election void and unenforceable." Since homeowners may choose to live or not in such private covenanted areas, this restriction seems not unduly harmful to free political speech. On the other hand, local government entities should not be empowered to restrict free political speech in any but the most narrow way.

HB 2423 will ensure that the display of political signs on private residential property is a right not to be infringed upon by local governments.


Representative Jana Goodman