



House Elections Committee
Chair, Rep. Blake Carpenter
Hearing: February 18, 2021

Position – OPPOSE HB 2333

Chair Carpenter, and Members of the Committee,

The Mainstream Coalition opposes HB 2333, a bill that would reduce assistance and education to voters.

The Mainstream Coalition engages in a great deal of nonpartisan voter education, and we have seen first hand how confused voters can be about the process of applying for an advance voting ballot. Especially in 2020, when third-party ballot applications were delivered on top of official but unexpected county election office ballot applications, many voters remained unsure of whether they had, in fact, applied for an advance ballot. Inconsistent updates of the official VoterView data contributed to this confusion, preventing voters from checking for themselves on the status of their applications. Throw in worries about mail delivery and disinformation about voter fraud, and it is no wonder voters were confused and anxious last year.

In light of that, we fail to see the wisdom of eliminating some avenues of voter education and assistance. This bill would lead to some voters believing they had successfully applied for an advance ballot, when in fact their application had been discarded with no notice. Additionally, language in this bill could be interpreted to prevent county election officers from reaching out to advance ballot applicants to clear up incomplete information, a vital service provided today by dedicated election officers.

The restriction to candidates (which does not appear to extend to the candidate's campaign or staff?) against helping voters with ballot applications will hurt aspiring candidates who may already be working with a shoestring operation. As you know, a candidate is often the most enthusiastic, dedicated, and hard-working member of a campaign. To hamstring them from assisting potential constituents with an application for an advance ballot seems designed to favor well-funded or incumbent campaigns.

As with other election law changes proposed in this Legislative Session, this bill feels like it is a solution in search of a problem. We trust that proponents of this bill will provide accurate, sourced data outlining their concerns in this regard. The Secretary of State himself found no evidence of voter fraud in this past election, and urged the Legislature to avoid significant changes to election laws.

We join our voice to his, in asking this committee to avoid limiting options for voter assistance and education. Please oppose passage of HB 2333.

Thank you,

Michael Poppa, Executive Director of the Mainstream Coalition
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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.