



**2020 - 2021 Executive board**

Janet Klasinski, Leavenworth County  
President

Tina Spencer, Marion County  
Vice President

Ashley Mannis, Sherman County  
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Janet Paddock, Franklin County  
Treasurer

February 17, 2021

Honorable Kansas State Representative Blake Carpenter  
Chair, House, Elections Committee and Distinguished Members of the Committee

Re: House Bill 2333, relating to advance ballots – Opposition

Chairman Carpenter and Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Rick Piepho, Harvey County Clerk and Chairman of the Elections and Legislative Committees of the Kansas County Clerks and Elections Officials Association (KCCEOA). The KCCEOA is a statewide organization with 109 members. Our membership includes publicly elected county clerks, charter appointed county clerks, and additionally, four election officers from the most populous counties in Kansas. The duties of the County Clerk are significant under statute. One of our most public facing functions is free and fair administration of elections. We take this duty very seriously. We prepare for every possible, and impossible, scenario which could occur. Our organization has a legislative platform adopted by the membership. I have attached that platform to this testimony for your use.

I am testifying today in my capacity as legislative and elections committee chairman on behalf of the association to object to several provisions of this act which would eliminate our statutory role as election officers. We know this was not the sponsor's intent, to end the administration of elections statewide, but this measure would in fact make it impossible for the members of the KCCEOA to serve the people of our state in our capacities as election officials.

Under Section 1 ( j ) we are in need of more guidance. Under current law we work diligently to fairly process the request of the citizen requesting an advance ballot or casting a ballot. Section 1 ( j ) of this measure tells us that we shall not process any application which comes to us as incomplete. Currently, when there is an omission or an error on an advance ballot request form, most election officials reach out to the voter to correct the issue. The voter took the time and effort to fill out the form so they might receive and potentially cast an advance ballot. As Election Officials we take this effort on the part of the voter seriously. Should we trash these incomplete applications? Should we put them in a reserve file and not attempt to contact the voter? I think we can all agree that more participation in the electoral process is of benefit to Democracy. Please give us, and the Secretary, more guidance on this section.

Section 2 ( g ) is even more problematic. Mr. Chairman, 101 County Clerks in this state, who also administer elections, are elected officials. In the other four counties the election official is appointed by the Secretary of State. One hundred and one of us run for office every four years in the same election cycle as the Governor and other statewide officers. Every single day, during the fourth year's election season, we, as election officials, but simultaneously as candidates, participate in the activities contemplated under this

new section. We touch ballots, we count ballots and we instruct those working under oath in administering the election. I am sure you can see the problematic nature of this section especially given the penalty of a misdemeanor for conducting our statutorily required jobs.

For the same reasons Section 3 ( B ) (i,ii,iii, and iv) are equally problematic. There are counties small enough in this state where the only employees of the Clerk's Office are the elected Clerk and his or her Deputy County Clerk. It is unreasonable to believe that the counties in this state would be able to execute any election given these provisions. Also to note, there are some county clerks and election officials who are elected to more than one position in their county. Some may serve as a school board member or in a position on a drainage or library district.

Mr. Chairman, for these reasons, we strongly oppose HB 2333 and ask that the committee hear our concerns and act accordingly. I will gladly stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,



Rick Piepho  
Harvey County Clerk & Election Officer – KCCEOA Elections Committee Chair



## **2021 Legislative Priorities**

The members of the KCCEO want to bring special focus to the following with regard to elections:

- Maintaining the status quo with regard to election and canvass schedules.
- Maintaining the status quo with regard to partisan/non-partisan elections.
- Maintaining the 21 day deadline, prior to an election, for the close of voter registration rolls.
- Advocating for protecting the integrity of the anonymous ballot while allowing administrative voting record access to candidates and the public when required by law.
- Advocating for measures that allow provisional ballots to be counted.
- Advocating for expansion of the eligibility requirements for permanent advance voting status.
- Advocating for establishing lawful, consistent and workable timelines for special elections.

The membership of the KCCEO reviews, discusses and participates in drafting the Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) annual legislative policy. The members of KCCEO want to bring special focus to the following with regard to county governance:

- Retain and enhance county home rule authority and maintain local decision making, standing on the principle that government closest to the people will best understand and serve the community's needs.
- Support local control of property taxes; includes repeal or revision of tax lid.
- Oppose unfunded mandates and support state funding for any current statutory mandates.
- Support allowing choice of alternate sources or methods for distributing official publications, including legal notices.
- Support flexibility to utilize preliminary values when calculating mill levy rates for shared districts.
- The KCCEO joins with other county office holders in opposing deferment of payments to KPERs and the sweeping of funds intended for transportation.



**Statement:** The Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association (KCCEOA) serves the residents of all Kansas Counties through professional training for our members, presenting the Association's position on state issues, advocating policy positions which increase access for our constituents to county government and safe, secure, free and fair elections.

## 2020 - 2021 KCCEOA Executive board & legislative committees

Janet Klasinski, Leavenworth County | President  
Tina Spencer, Marion County | Vice president  
Ashley Mannis, Sherman County | Secretary  
Janet Paddock, Franklin County | Treasurer

The **Election committee** formulates policy and education for election-related topics. Members also work with the Secretary of State's office and legislative committee on any election legislative initiatives.

**Rick Piepho, Harvey County (chair)**  
**Sarah Rains, Hodgeman County (vice-chair)**  
Sherrie L. Riebel, Allen County  
Kayla Wang, Clay County  
Angie Kirchner, Coffey County  
Karen Madison, Cowley County  
Don Pyle, Crawford County  
Debbie Cox, Ford County  
Rebecca Nordyke, Geary County  
Connie Schmidt, Johnson County  
Crystal Rucker, Logan County  
Chris Treaster, Mitchell County  
Heather Betzold, Osborne County  
Stacey Rein, Pawnee County  
Rich Vargo, Riley County  
Tabitha Lehman, Sedgwick County  
Stacia Long, Seward County  
Andrew Howell, Shawnee County  
Shelly Harms, Thomas County  
Rhonda Willard, Wilson County  
Bruce Newby, Wyandotte County

The **Legislative committee** is tasked with proposing and monitoring any legislation not dealing with elections.

**Rick Piepho, Harvey County (chair)**  
Connie Pretzer, Chase County  
Kyle Rennie, Cherokee County  
Jamie Shew, Douglas County  
Janet Paddock, Franklin County  
Ashley Rogers, Gray County  
Linda Buttron, Jefferson County  
Somir Hassan, Johnson County  
Dawn Harlow, Lincoln County  
Janet White, Miami County  
Chelsey Schmidt, Morris County  
Rachel Finley, Rawlins County  
Donna Patton, Reno County  
Mary Nuss, Russell County  
Jamie Doss, Saline County  
Pamela McDaniel, Scott County  
Kelly Arnold, Sedgwick County  
Debra Norris, Sumner County  
Bridgette Cobbins, Wyandotte County

**KCCEOA Lobbyist - R.J. Wilson**

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