

May 22, 2025

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners
111 S. Cherry Street, Suite 3300
Olathe, KS 66061



PO Box 13048
Overland Park, KS 66282
(913) 490-4100
aclukansas.org

Brandi Fisher
President

Sandy Brown
Vice President

Micah W. Kubic, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Brad Stuewe, M.D.
Treasurer

Marie Woodbury
Secretary

Joy Springfield
National Board Representative

Karla Juarez
Equity and Inclusion Officer

Kathleen Alonso
Marquetta Atkins
Trent Davis
Liz Hueben
Trina Powell
Usha Rafferty
Joyce Rosenberg
Annie Tietze
Van Williams
Board of Directors

Dear Commissioners,

A healthy democracy depends on the full participation of all its citizens. When every voice can be heard and every vote can be cast without barriers, our democratic institutions are stronger and more representative. However, that strength is undermined when systemic obstacles prevent segments of our community from exercising their rights. The ACLU of Kansas recognizes the critical issue of language access at polling locations in Johnson County. Many citizens of Johnson County, particularly those with limited English proficiency (LEP), face significant barriers to participating fully in our democratic process. This issue is especially pressing given that nearly 10% of Johnson County's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

In order to further strengthen our democracy, we are respectfully asking you to support the adoption of a non-binding commission resolution calling on the Secretary of State and the Johnson County Election Commissioner to provide additional voting materials in Spanish for Johnson County voters. This initiative would ensure that all voters, regardless of language proficiency, have equitable access to participate in elections. In particular, we hope to encourage the election authorities to make available in Spanish voter registration forms and instructions, polling place information, general information about election dates in Johnson County, ballot instructions, and information about the right to receive language assistance at the polls (which is mandated by federal law).

We respectfully ask that the commission pass this non-binding resolution as a way of encouraging the Secretary of State and Election Commissioner to take action. A resolution is a way for Johnson County government to articulate its values, namely its belief in a healthy democracy and in inclusivity. Indeed, that is the very reason that the commission's own DEI Coalition has already considered—and unanimously recommended—the adoption of this resolution.

Expanding language access in this way is fully within the power of the Secretary of State and the Johnson County Election Commissioner. Nothing in state or federal law precludes them from doing so. Although there is a federal law that mandates some counties make election materials available in languages other than English, Johnson County is not covered by it. However, federal law is the policy floor on this issue, not the ceiling. Many jurisdictions around the state and country offer language access even though they are not required to do so and have done so for decades without incident.



Other Kansas counties are currently providing voter registration forms, voting instructions, polling place information, election notices, sample ballots, voter guides, absentee or mail-in voting instructions, website translation, provisional ballot information, voter identification requirements, and election hotlines.

A resolution from the Board of County Commissioners would serve as a powerful affirmation of its commitment to equal access at the polls and the fundamental right of every individual to vote free from barriers. It would also underscore the commission's support for comprehensive language access within its districts, reinforcing the critical importance of this initiative to the Secretary of State and the Election Commissioner and emphasizing the urgent need for action.

Your support would be invaluable in moving this effort forward. You are keenly aware of the importance of ensuring that every resident has the opportunity to make their voice heard, particularly in communities where language barriers exist.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I would very much appreciate the opportunity to visit with you directly about this issue, to hear your concerns and answer any questions you might have.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that every voter in Johnson County can participate fully in our elections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micah W. Kubic". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Micah W. Kubic, Ph.D.
Executive Director