

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Kansas Coalition for Citizen Participation Requests Hearing for Bill to Expand Civic Engagement in Kansas Elections**

**OVERLAND PARK, KS ---** Today, the Kansas Coalition for Citizen Participation (KCCP) sent a letter to Sen. Elaine Bowers, Chair of the Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee, requesting a hearing in the 2018 Legislative session on a bill aimed at increasing citizen participation in Kansas elections.

The coalition requests a hearing on a bill that would (1) repeal the Secretary of State's bureaucratic proof of citizenship requirement for voter registration, (2) enact election-day registration to allow citizens to register and cast a ballot on the same day, (3) withdraw from the wasteful and inefficient "Interstate Crosscheck" system, and (4) expand early voting with a permanent advance voter status.

KCCP is comprised of organizations that serve a diverse range of Kansans and have seen firsthand how our state's failed election policies have led to fewer citizens exercising their right to vote, as evident by the fact that Kansas consistently ranks among the bottom third of states for both voter registration and voter turnout.

Policies such as Secretary Kobach's "Show Me Your Papers" law have kept tens of thousands of citizens who do not have ready access to their citizenship documents—including veterans, senior citizens, students, and people on a low or fixed-income—shut out of the process.

Arbitrary deadlines, such as registration deadlines and shortened early voting periods, further deter busy Kansans from voting. Many states, including Utah, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Iowa, and North Carolina have enacted both election-day registration and permanent advance voting, and have experienced significant increases in turnout as a result. By enacting these simple reforms, we, too, could experience greater citizen participation in Kansas.

No Kansan should have to choose between going to work and casting a ballot. And no Kansan should have to pay exorbitant fees for out of state documents in order to register to vote. Most of all, these restrictions have sent a message to citizens across the state that their voice does not matter.

If we are to create a healthy democracy in Kansas, we must cut the red tape and remove the bureaucratic hurdles that prevent tens of thousands of citizens from making their voices heard. KCCP looks forward to working with the Legislature to pass legislation that will strengthen citizen participation and civic health across the state.

The Kansas Coalition for Citizen Participation is comprised of the ACLU of Kansas; Council on American-Islamic Relations– Kansas; Communities Creating Opportunity; El Centro, Inc.; Greater Kansas City Women’s Political Caucus; Indivisible KC; Kansas Appleseed; Kansas Association of Community Action Programs; Kansas Interfaith Action; League of Latin American Citizens– Kansas; League of Women Voters of Kansas; Loud Light; MainStream Coalition; Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice; NAACP – Kansas State Conference; National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Kansas City Section; Social Justice Council of Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church; Stand Up KC; Urban League of Kansas; Women for Kansas

You can learn more about KCCP [here](#).