



Testimony

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Filling Governing Body Vacancies Senate Bill 10

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Senate Ethics and Elections Committee**

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City opposes Senate Bill 10. The bill proposes a State mandated solution that will affect every City and County in Kansas because of an isolated situation in one City.

The situation occurred in 2013 when Commissioner Mark Holland, who was the District 1 At-Large Commissioner was elected Mayor, leaving the district seat vacant. The Unified Government Commission went through a process to select a replacement. 18 citizens applied for the job. After presentations and interviews, the field was narrowed to two finalists. The Commission was deadlocked with 5 in favor of one candidate and 5 in favor of the other candidate. Despite several attempts, the Commission was unable to break the deadlock and come to agreement, so the seat has remained vacant.

Since this is an At-Large seat, every citizen in the district still had representation from their individual district Commissioner. The situation will soon be resolved as elections are being held in March and April. The citizens will vote and select a new Commissioner.

When it became apparent the Commission could not agree, the idea of holding a special election was discussed. The cost of that special election was estimated at about \$150,000. Money that was not budgeted and quite honestly, given all of the other financial burdens and revenue losses suffered by actions of the Kansas Legislature, it was a cost the Unified Government could not afford.

The Commission continued to function, business continued to be conducted and the community continued to progress. It is a local situation which the community and its elected representatives dealt with. It is a local situation that does not need a State mandated solution. The Unified Government's opposition to Senate Bill 10 rests on two principles--- local control and cost. By passing Senate Bill 10 you will be interfering with local governance and potentially imposing large costs on cities and counties.