

City of Wichita
City Council Meeting
March 18, 2014

TO: Mayor and City Council
SUBJECT: Opposition of Legislation regarding Municipal Elections
INITIATED BY: City Manager's Office
AGENDA: City Council Member's Agenda

Recommended: Adopt the proposed resolution in opposition of pending legislative enactments mandating the timing and partisanship of local elections.

Background: Currently there are several legislative bills pending before the Kansas Legislature which would change the timing of municipal elections from April in odd numbered years to November in even numbered years. Additionally, the proposed legislation would introduce partisan politics to local elections.

Analysis: The proposed Resolution will serve as a clear indication of the City Council's continuing opposition to the legislature's attempts to remove local control of the municipal election process and to introduce partisan politics in local elections.

Financial Considerations: None.

Legal Considerations: The Resolution has been drafted and approved as to form by the Law Department.

Recommendations/Actions: It is recommended that the City Council adopt the Resolution in opposition of legislative mandates removing local control of municipal elections and authorize the necessary signatures.

Attachment: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 14-088

A RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE STATE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO LOCAL ELECTIONS AS PROPOSED BY SENATE BILL NO. 211 (2013)

WHEREAS, the Kansas Legislature is considering an amendment of state statutes regulating municipal elections;

WHEREAS, legislative proponents seek to mandate the timing and partisanship of local elections and seek to remove local control of the election process, and;

WHEREAS, the format and timing for local elections are best left to the local officials who are most familiar and have the closest ties to their electorate, and;

WHEREAS, the City of Wichita shares the legislative concern about low voter turnout and has responded with several initiatives to increase the flow of information and inform and engage the public regarding policy issues which affect the City, and;

WHEREAS, switching local elections from spring to fall creates a complexity regarding the term expiration of existing officeholders that the Revisor of Statutes has been unable to resolve, and;

WHEREAS, the introduction of partisan politics into local government issues will only polarize local elected official and create artificial limits on important local policy debates, and;

WHEREAS, a partisan requirement for local elections could disqualify many local candidates and office holders because of the Hatch Act, and;

WHEREAS, the current system of locally-controlled non-partisan municipal elections is recognized as a national model for good government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the governing body of the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas, does hereby oppose the passage and enactment of state legislation that alters the current format of local elections.

Dated this 18th day of March, 2014

Carl Brewer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Karen Sublett
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Gary E. Rebenstorf, Director of Law