

KRIS W. KOBACH
Secretary of State



Memorial Hall, 1st Floor
120 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1594
(785) 296-4575
www.sos.ks.gov

STATE OF KANSAS

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KOBACH'S COLUMN

Kansas Secretary of State Kris W. Kobach

We've made a lot of progress toward making Kansas election law the strongest in the country to ensure that one citizen gets one vote without that vote being nullified by ineligible voters. The Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections voted overwhelmingly (8-1) in bi-partisan support for an amended HB 2067, the Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) Act, on Thursday, March 17, 2011.

The bill passed by the Senate committee retained the requirements (1) for each voter registration application to include proof of U.S. citizenship, and (2) for each voter to show photographic identification at the polls. These are the core provisions of the SAFE Act, which will ensure that Kansas has the most secure elections in the country. However, the Senate committee did make one amendment that is not in the best interest of Kansans.

While the photo ID requirement will still become effective January 1, 2012, the committee changed the effective date for proof of citizenship when registering to January 1, 2013. Delaying proof of citizenship requirements will give aliens, who are ineligible to vote, an extra year to get on the voter rolls. And it is far easier to keep ineligible people off the registered voter lists than to identify them once they have signed up illegally.

That said, I am greatly encouraged that the Senate committee passed the SAFE Act, and I hope that this mistake will be fixed before final passage of the bill.

Your Secretary of State,

Kris Kobach

P.S. Did you know that most charitable organizations are required to file with the Secretary of State? Not only can you check how much money a specific organization raised, but also the percentage spent for fundraising expenses.

I urge Kansans to be informed when making charitable giving decisions. Visit www.sos.ks.gov and click on Quick Links "Kansas Charity Check" to learn your rights as a consumer, get sound advice on charitable giving, and more.