

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

03/05/2026 Upon Adjournment

SB26-047 CO Firefighter Safety Act Petition Elections

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Steve Schleiker For El Paso County Clerk and Recorder	<p>Chair and Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee:</p> <p>On behalf of the Office of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder, I am writing to express support for Senate Bill 26-047 concerning coordinated elections for firefighter collective bargaining ballot questions.</p> <p>SB26-047 provides a practical and clarifying update to current statute by allowing these ballot measures to appear on the ballot during qualifying coordinated general elections, including appropriate odd-numbered year elections. This change aligns the Firefighter Safety Act petition process with Colorado’s established coordinated election framework under the Uniform Election Code.</p> <p>From an election administration perspective, the bill is straightforward and workable. It does not create a new election requirement, nor does it impose additional procedural burdens on county clerks. Instead, it allows qualifying ballot questions to be incorporated into elections that are already scheduled and administered. This promotes efficiency, consistency, and voter participation.</p> <p>Importantly, conducting these measures within a coordinated election structure can reduce costs for local governments when</p>

	<p>compared to holding a standalone special election. Coordinated elections allow participating jurisdictions to share costs proportionally, resulting in more efficient use of public resources while maintaining the integrity and accessibility of the election process.</p> <p>SB26-047 is administratively feasible, fiscally responsible, and supportive of clear election procedures. For these reasons, the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder’s Office respectfully supports this legislation.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Steve Schleiker El Paso County Clerk and Recorder El Paso County, Colorado</p>
<p>Kristin Dallison For themselves</p>	<p>Chair and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>My name is Kristin Dallison, and I am writing in strong support of SB26-047, the Colorado Firefighter Safety Act Petition Elections bill.</p> <p>This legislation is not theoretical for my community. It is deeply personal.</p> <p>Our local fire department recently lost two exceptional firefighters after they attempted to pursue union representation under the Colorado Firefighter Safety Act. These were not disruptive employees. They were dedicated public servants who put their lives on the line for our community. They were professionals who</p>

	<p>simply sought the opportunity to advocate for safer working conditions and fair representation.</p> <p>Instead of being able to bring the question to voters, they were unlawfully terminated for attempting to follow the process. If SB26-047 had been in place, allowing petition elections to be placed on coordinated ballots more efficiently and affordably, the issue could have gone directly to the community. Voters would have had the opportunity to decide, and those two firefighters would still have their jobs.</p> <p>This bill is about process, but process matters. When the path to the ballot is overly restrictive or financially burdensome, it silences both firefighters and the communities they serve. SB26-047 ensures that voters determine whether collective bargaining protections should apply locally.</p> <p>Firefighters deserve a lawful, democratic avenue to advocate for safety equipment, staffing levels, training standards, and working conditions. These are not abstract labor issues; they are public safety issues. When firefighters have structured representation, communities benefit from improved retention, morale, and operational safety.</p> <p>SB26-047 strengthens:</p> <p>Democratic access by allowing questions to be placed on coordinated election ballots.</p> <p>Fiscal responsibility by reducing the need for costly special elections.</p> <p>Local control by ensuring the ultimate decision rests with voters.</p>
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	<p>Workplace safety by preserving the integrity of the Firefighter Safety Act process.</p> <p>The loss of two outstanding firefighters in our community is a stark reminder that the current system can have real human consequences. We should not lose dedicated first responders simply because the process to seek representation is unnecessarily difficult.</p> <p>This bill restores balance. It protects democratic participation. It supports the men and women who protect us every day.</p> <p>I respectfully urge you to vote YES on SB26-047.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
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