

## **Legislative Newsletter April 9, 2007**

**Hi All,**

I have finally caught up on sleep after the several late nights and thought it probably safe enough now to write a newsletter. It has been a week since we have temporarily adjourned. We will return for the Veto Session on April 24th. Since you have heard by now of the larger or more controversial issues, like gambling, I thought I'd fill you in on some background information instead.

### **First - Since I last wrote I have among other things:**

- Sponsored 4 students as House pages from Blue Valley Northwest High School.
- Met with the Kenyan Women Delegation.
- Spoke (along with Kay Wolf) to the Northeast Johnson County Women's Republican Club giving a legislative update.
- Met with representatives from Spring Hill.

### **Things I learned:**

One of the things I learned early on is that no bill is entirely dead or entirely safe until the gavel is struck and we all go home at the very end of the Veto Session. While we have made gains in school finance and currently have the increased LOB option tucked in the appropriations bill, it could still be at risk. The same is true of the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) that was nearly lost. (Described in the last newsletter.) I have to say all of us from Johnson County have worked hard together to protect our schools and I can't praise enough those who were so instrumental in strategizing to make this happen. While Johnson County representatives have our differences on any number of other issues, we have generally coalesced in this area.

The other big learning is that those of you who are keeping track of issues by bill number need to know that bills change and sometimes radically. There is a process called "gut and go" where a bill could be about insurance in one house, be 'guttled' in the other house and become a transportation bill, for example. Also, bills that begin with odious parts can be edited to become pretty good bills. That is the advantage of having a committee, then the entire chamber, then the other chamber "work" the bills.

If you have figured out the bill tracking process and know that a favorite bill has been bundled into another bill, then you need to know how very helpful it is to hear from you where that bill is currently located. There are very few of us who can keep track of all of the areas we are expected to watch, so please don't hesitate to email us on any bill that concerns you or that you have tracked. I keep close notes from constituents and really appreciate the heads up.

### **By the numbers:**

Watching the news might lead you to believe that legislative work involves a lot of partisan bickering and little in the way of productive policy that impacts everyday Kansans. With political agendas set from the very first week, each of us has very clearly

staked our claims over the issues we value and hope to see become law, but we spend much more time working together for the common good.

Although I'm only going to highlight a few of the legislative initiatives, I thought you might like to look at House work completed this session, "by the numbers".

- 158 House bills were passed and sent to the Senate.
- 14 bills died in the House.
- 16 House resolutions were adopted.
- 9 House concurrent resolutions were adopted and sent to the Senate.
- 89 Senate bills were passed by the House.
- 1 Senate bill was killed in the House.

This doesn't include where the bulk of the work was done - in committee meetings. As you might imagine, some of these proposals are far more controversial than others but each requires specific attention to detail, explanation and careful consideration before being voted into law. Because our days are limited and the proposals are vast, not everything makes it to the table. Some pieces go down for technicalities not realized in time. Others receive approval because of a strong majority. It is a tedious process, but we work each day to ensure that we yield a worthwhile product.

**Following is a partial list of the legislation considered by the House that I supported:**

- \* Pre-funding of K-12 school finance plan for 2008 and 2009 - SB 30.
- \* Encouragement of our state's entrepreneurial spirit through tax incentives such as the franchise tax repeal.
- \* Restoring the credibility of our state's electoral process through campaign & election reform.
- \* Beginning the reformation of our state's health care system with proposals from the Health Task Force.
- \* Committing the State to restructuring its employee pay matrix with the help of the Select Committee on the State Employee Pay Plan.
- \* Holding the line on State Spending of Unexpected Revenues - keeping budget growth at about 5% - almost half of the percentage increase seen last year.
- \* Property and income tax relief for those on limited incomes.
- \* Passing the funeral privacy act to prevent disruption of funerals.

I believe that although we didn't accomplish everything I would have liked, we did accomplish much - and the groundwork has been laid to come back at Veto Session and conclude the positive progress we've made. Of the major items left undone one is the funding of the university building and infrastructure repairs and another is funding for physically and developmentally disabled who are on waiting lists for services. There are others, of course, but those seem the most pressing. Thank you for allowing me to serve on your behalf to improve things in Kansas, to magnify what is already working well and to keep an eye on what we can do better.

**Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you believe may be interested. If you received this as a forwarded message and would like to be included on the newsletter list, please email me at [spaldingboe@aol.com](mailto:spaldingboe@aol.com) .**

**As ever if you wish to discontinue getting these newsletters, please let me know and I will take you off the list.**

FYI: The legislative hotline number available to all Kansas constituents is 800-432-3924. You may use this toll free number to leave messages for legislators and gain access to legislative activity and documents.

**Respectfully,  
Sheryl Spalding**

**Representative District 29**