

Hi All,

Well we have just passed turn around week which is the time when most of the bills that are going to be passed must be passed by one chamber and given to the other. There are a lot of bills that are introduced into committees and even passed out of a committee that just never make it to the floor of the House or Senate. Of course the words of the bills don't disappear and may be amended into any other bill on the floor of the House or Senate at any time. There are also exempt committees like the Tax or Appropriations Committee. A bill can be heard and brought out of an exempt committee at any time.

The most important issue over all is still the budget, but we reached a milestone when the House and Senate agreed on a rescission bill with little dissension. A rescission bill is one that cuts budgets for the current year. Taking the governor's lead we cut tens of millions out of the current budget and may have to cut a little further to balance the budget yet this year. As part of that package we reduced salaries for 'state officers' including ourselves by 5% saving nearly a million dollars. The House also added over \$2 million dollars to Home and Community Based Services for individuals with developmental disabilities in order to add \$5.5 million in federal funds this year.

OTHER BUSINESS BESIDES BUDGET

This last month I carried two bills from the Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee. One concerned notification to victims of crime when a perpetrator is about to be released from SRS custody. Currently if a perpetrator is about to be released from jail there is notification to a victim. However if that perpetrator is found to be mentally ill and is remanded to SRS custody then because of privacy laws, the victim will not be notified when the offender is to be released. HB 2440 rectifies that and allows notification of release from SRS.

The second bill from Corrections and Juvenile Justice concerns the commitment of sexually violent predators. Under current law if a criminal, thought to be sexually violent, is about to be released from custody, a Multidisciplinary Team meets. Under the Civil Commitment Act, the criminal judged to be sexually violent, can be retained in a secure environment. During the natural order of things those same criminals can come up for work release. The Parole Board and Department of Corrections decided that prior to work release would also be a good time to get

the Multidisciplinary Team together to prevent sexually violent predators from being given work release. HB 2509 makes that possible.

In the Government Efficiency Committee the two bills I introduced this month both passed out of committee and were passed also by the House. One concerning bond investments, HB2540, would have saved Blue Valley taxpayers \$180,000 last year if it had been enacted. The other requires a report to the House next year of all the unused and underused real estate property under the auspices of each government department. The Department of Administration was very helpful on this. There has been anecdotal evidence that there is lots of property around the state that is owned by the state. If we could sell some of these we not only would recognize real revenue to the budget, it is money we do not have to spend for upkeep. In addition, local governments cannot tax real estate owned by the state. If we can sell these properties to local businessmen everyone benefits. HB 2631 helps that happen.

EDUCATION ISSUES

The Education Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss school district consolidation. There are two very different scenarios from Legislative Post Audit. The first scenario requires school districts to meet the 1960's consolidation criteria relating to square miles and numbers of people. Scenario 2 consolidates districts under 1600 students in size. The first option would save the state about \$18 million per year and the second would save about \$138 million per year. Saving 10's of millions of dollars for the state is no small issue especially now.

Since I last wrote I have been meeting with constituents and constituent groups on various topics including the following:

*The Kansas Legislative Higher Education Caucus.

*The Kansas Bankers Association.

*Journalism students from Blue Valley and Shawnee Mission who interviewed legislators about school funding.

*The American Cancer Society.

*The Kansas Action for Children celebrating their 30th anniversary.

*The Kansas Chamber reception where we heard Joe Scarborough.

*The Kansas Credit Union Association.

*Four students from Blue Valley were invited to be legislative pages for the day.

*Two gifted and talented students were my shadows for gifted and talented day in the capitol and I met two others who were from Blue Valley.

*MOCSA, Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault came to the legislature to talk of their work. Kansas Crisis Hotline is 888-END –ABUSE. or to learn more www.mocsa.org

*Medical Society of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

As always it is a pleasure to serve you. If I may be of assistance on any issue please call 785-296-7649 or email me at Spaldingboe@aol.com

Thank you,

Representative Sheryl Spalding

District 29

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

FYI: The legislative hotline number is available to all Kansas constituents and is 1-800-432-3924. You may call this toll free number to leave a message for legislators and gain access to legislative activity and documents.