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NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

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Amendment to Outlaw Revenge Porn

Things have picked up here at the Capitol. The efficiency group released their final report on how to save the state an estimated \$2 billion over 10 years and will be discussed and debated in the various committees in the coming weeks. Many GOP members of the Legislature are hoping the efficiency report will be the answer to all of the problems we are having with our budget. I am reviewing the recommendations with a healthy dose of skepticism.

Press Release on my work on the House Floor

It was so disappointing to me that the Revenge Pornography legislation I have been working on for the past 1 ½ years failed to pass out of committee on Wednesday, that I took advantage of the opportunity to amend the bill into HB 2501 – a bill that broadened our definition of crimes committed using electronic devices(such as computers and cell phones)

Topeka, KS: On Thursday afternoon, Rep. Sydney Carlin (D-Manhattan) successfully offered an amendment to a bill on the House floor outlawing revenge porn. Revenge porn is the posting of nude or sexually explicit photos or videos of an ex-spouse or significant other online without their consent.

“Within hours of a vengeful ex-partner uploading images of a victim to a website, that image can be viewed hundreds of thousands of times,” Rep. Carlin said. “In a matter of days, it can become the first search engine result for a victim’s name and therefore unintentionally viewed by a victim’s family, employer, co-workers, and friends.”

Carlin indicated she hoped the fear of prosecution would deter individuals from maliciously and intentionally violating a person’s sexual privacy.

“This is not a recent phenomenon, but its prevalence, reach, and impact have increased in recent years due to the internet and cell phones,” Rep. Carlin said. “There should be an expectation of privacy when sharing explicit images within the context of an intimate relationship, and now if that privacy is violated, victims will have legal recourse.”

Carlin said the threat of revenge porn can often play a role in intimate partner violence.

“Abusers will use the threat of disclosure to keep their partners from leaving or reporting their abuse to law enforcement,” she said. “It can also be used as a form of control for sex traffickers, pimps, and rapists.”

While there are many laws protecting almost every other form of privacy including financial, medical, and data, laws protecting a person’s sexual privacy are relatively new. One year ago when I introduced this bill, only sixteen other states had passed similar legislation, since then bills have been passed in ten others states.

“This bill is a tool to be able to prosecute a horrible act that causes immediate, devastating, and in many cases irreversible harm,” Rep. Carlin said. “Private images should not be turned into public sexual entertainment.”

The bill will now move over to the Senate for them to work and pass. I am still working on it.

Final Efficiency Report Released

This week the final efficiency report was released. As you may remember, during the 2015 Legislative Session the GOP-controlled Legislature decided to hire, at the price of over \$2.6 million, an outside firm to audit state government in search of "efficiency." A preliminary report was issued last month but the final version was released this week. The final report is over 290 pages and largely contains the same recommendations that were contained in the preliminary report. This final report, however, contains a Top 21 List of Recommendations the efficiency group recommends implementing first. The list includes the hiring of additional auditors and collectors for the Department of Revenue to collect state taxes, forcing all school districts to use a single health plan, forcing school districts to spend down their savings accounts, and applying for more federal grants.

There are 105 recommendations and I am still reviewing their details. You can see the full report [here](#). I will be watching action on this report closely as many of the proposed changes will drastically change the ability of state government to provide services and help to the people of Kansas.

I do believe it is important to seek ways to improve the efficiency of state government; however, many of these recommendations move beyond efficiency and are simply cuts for the sake of making cuts.

Budget Sent to the Governor

Last week the House and the Senate each passed out their versions of the budget bill. Both bills addressed this fiscal year's shortfall of \$14 million, as well as the next fiscal year's projected shortfall of \$170 million. As I discussed last week, the budget that passed the House simply plugged the holes in the budget with more fund sweeps and transfers, including the State Highway Fund and KPERs.

A conference committee met to hammer out the differences between the Senate and the House Budgets. The conference committees are made up of only 6 members- 3 from the House and 3 from the Senate. They were able to reach an agreement in a single day (actually 8 minutes). The final agreement differed little from the Governor's original recommendations and continues the shell game of moving money around and using sweeps and transfers to balance the budget. Because of the precarious situation with state revenue, the pared down conference committee (just 4 members, all Republicans) gave "enhanced" allotment authority to the Governor if the General Fund ending balance is falling below \$100 million at the end of FY16; the same authority was granted for FY17.

This "enhanced" authority allows the Governor to reduce State General Fund expenditures or transfer money from special revenue funds, which includes the highway fund, and KPERs in whatever amount is needed to bring the State General Fund ending balance back up to \$100 million. Naturally, these provisions are very troubling because the highway fund is once again exposed to more transfers if the projected ending balances are less than \$100 Million for both years. Looks like the Republicans don't have much faith in the Governor's economic policy. This budget allows the administration to continue to make cuts to programs that are needed and appreciated by our constituents in the name of continuing the tax cuts for the wealthy and without addressing the long-term consequences. I voted NO.

Sweeping Changes to School Curriculum

On Wednesday this week, the House Education Committee passed out a bill that would drastically change the curriculum used in our public schools. The bill is HB 2292 (read the bill [here](#)). It directs schools to stop teaching anything that is in the Common Core standards.

The bill as written would prohibit schools from teaching algebra and reading comprehension because Common Core requires those to be taught. Another distressing element of this bill prevents schools from offering Advanced Placement (AP) classes and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes and even prevents schools from providing students the opportunity to take the ACT or SAT tests.

This is a drastic overreaction to the Common Core and subverts the Kansas Constitution, which declares that the State Board of Education will decide curriculum matters. This bill is without a doubt a bad bill. I will oppose this bill and vote against it if it reaches the House floor.

Ethnic Studies Required in School

Also this week, the House Education Committee passed out a bill that would require the teaching of Ethnic Studies in our schools. You can read HB 2207 [here](#). Ethnic Studies involves teaching about differences in cultures, peoples, and societies and is vital in providing our children with a well-rounded education that gives them the information and skills necessary to succeed in working with people. The

discipline of ethnic studies has been taught in our nation's colleges since the 1960's and both of our flagship universities require students to take courses related to diversity.

While I do support the underlying bill, an amendment attached to the bill by GOP members of the House Education Committee precludes textbooks and materials from advocating or discussing **social justice** remedies. This amendment ignores the history of social justice in our country and I do not support that amendment. If we can strip out those words on the House floor I will proudly support the bill.

Library Information

Mango

With Mango Languages, you can learn over 70 languages right from your own computer (or smartphone!). There are courses in Spanish, French, Mandarin, German, even Biblical Hebrew, plus many more. Mango uses real life situations and conversations to more effectively teach a new language. Mango also has courses for learning English in 19 foreign languages.

Link to Mango - <http://kslib.info/Mango>

If the page above asks for a Kansas Library eCard number, you may get one at any library in Kansas. Most people will be automatically recognized as inside Kansas and will not need this step. Questions: kslc@library.ks.gov or 785-296-3296. To see all the State Library's online resources, visit <http://kslib.info/eor>

Page Information

If you know of someone who would like to page for me, I have one open date. Please either call my office at 785-296-7657 or email my assistant, Dixie Sypher at dixie.sypher@house.ks.gov for more information.

Keep in touch

It is a special honor to serve as your state representative. I value and need your input on the various issues facing state government. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions. My office address is Room 451-S, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7657 or call the legislative hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me. Additionally, you can e-mail me at sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov. You can also follow the legislative session online at www.kslegislature.org. I'm working on my website, www.sydneycarlin.com. You can connect to my Twitter & Facebook pages through Icons on the site. Even if I haven't posted, there are plenty of interesting news items there.

Proudly Representing you in the Capitol

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