

January 16, 2018



**NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL**

# Sydney Carlin

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The 2018 Legislative Session commenced on Monday, January 8th. The legislature has several major issues to address this year, and we are ready to get to work on finding commonsense, bipartisan solutions. Kansas works better when we work together.

This year, I will represent you, and our local community on the Appropriations committee and as Ranking Minority Member on the Agriculture & Natural Resources and Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget committees. My calendar will remain full over the next few weeks as bills are introduced and committees begin their work. Complete daily calendars are available at [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org). I am working to keep constituents more informed via my website [www.SydneyCarlinforKansas.com](http://www.SydneyCarlinforKansas.com)

I look forward to strengthening the bipartisan coalition that enabled us to make positive changes last year, and building on that coalition to continue to work for the good of every Kansan.

### 2018 State of the State Address

The annual State of the State Address was delivered by Governor last week. Over the last several months, Brownback had begun handing over his gubernatorial duties to Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer, as he expected to be confirmed by the United States Senate for an ambassadorship. Brownback was nominated for the ambassador position by Donald Trump last year. In a rebuff, the U.S. Senate did not confirm the appointment, leaving confusion in Kansas over who is leading the state.

Brownback has since reclaimed his governorship, stating that he will remain in Kansas in his current position until confirmed. Though Brownback delivered the State of the State – again claiming all is well, despite the facts – the administration remains in limbo as we head into the 2018 session.

In a surprise move, Brownback proposed in his address that \$600 million be funneled to Kansas public schools over the next five years. This is a direct contradiction to the Governor's previous rhetoric and budgets. He has consistently pushed for spending cuts, not for more spending – his call for more school funding led to public disagreement between the Governor and Republican legislative leadership.

### Democratic Response to the State of the State Address

This year, the Democratic response to the Governor's State of the State address was delivered by House Democratic Leader, Rep. Jim Ward. At the close of the address, both House and Senate Democratic Caucuses gathered for a press conference, laying out their vision and priorities for the 2018 session:

- Sufficient and fair funding for all Kansas schools
- fiscal responsibility
- Medicaid expansion
- job creation and training
- restoring funding to core services
- Continuing the bipartisan coalition forged during the 2017 session to continue work on behalf of ALL Kansans

I was disappointed with the amount of credit The Governor took for initiatives he didn't create, such as the success of The Kansas Mentoring Organization, led by Coach Bill Snyder. Former Governor Kathleen Sebelius originally created the mentoring program.

He recognized the current K-12 budget issues, but failed to propose any policies to restore the cuts to higher education. This past January a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Study Panel on biodefense, Tom Daschle, former Senate Majority leader, referred to K-State as "the Silicon Valley for biodefense."

### **School Finance**

In October 2017, the Kansas Supreme Court struck down the school finance bill passed during the 2017 session as unconstitutional, giving the legislature a deadline of April 30, 2018 to present a new formula that will satisfy the adequacy and equity portions of the *Gannon* case.

Some conservative Republicans in the legislature have opposed the Court's ruling, and will instead seek a constitutional amendment to reduce the state's responsibility to kids and restrict the courts role in school finance. The Kansas Constitution directs that "the legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state" **in Article VI.**

Every child in Kansas deserves access to a quality education, regardless of where they live. Democrats are ready to get to work immediately on crafting a formula that meets all the Court's requirements and ensures our children are provided with every opportunity available.

### **Budget Proposal**

Governor Brownback – who had previously handed the budget reins to Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer in anticipation of his confirmation by the United States Senate – released his full budget proposal on Wednesday. Budget Director Sean Sullivan presented the proposal to the House Appropriations Committee. The proposal includes \$35.5 million in new spending for fiscal year 2018 (FY18) and \$290 million in new spending for FY19.

There is nothing in the proposal, however, to suggest how the Governor would pay for the new spending. "They are betting on revenue growth and the legislature coming up with how to help pay for the additional spending," said Sullivan. The budget office's "bottom line" budget document notes that sales tax revenues have grown 3.6%, and that corporate tax revenues have grown 25%.

The budget proposal has seen heavy criticism from Brownback's Republican allies in legislative leadership.

### **Health and Human Services**

Medicaid is one issue that could receive considerable attention during session. Medicaid expansion last session was passed by both the House and Senate, but was vetoed by the governor.

Legislators are also faced with the pressing situation at the Osawatomie State Hospital. Several options have been proposed including tearing down and rebuilding, relocating the facilities throughout the state, entering into a contract with a private company, or continuing to run it as a government agency. All of these options will be discussed during this session.

Other health-related topics that may be considered in 2018:

- Medical Marijuana
- Misusage of Opioids
- availability of behavioral health needs
- KanCare renewal
- Child Welfare
- Telemedicine

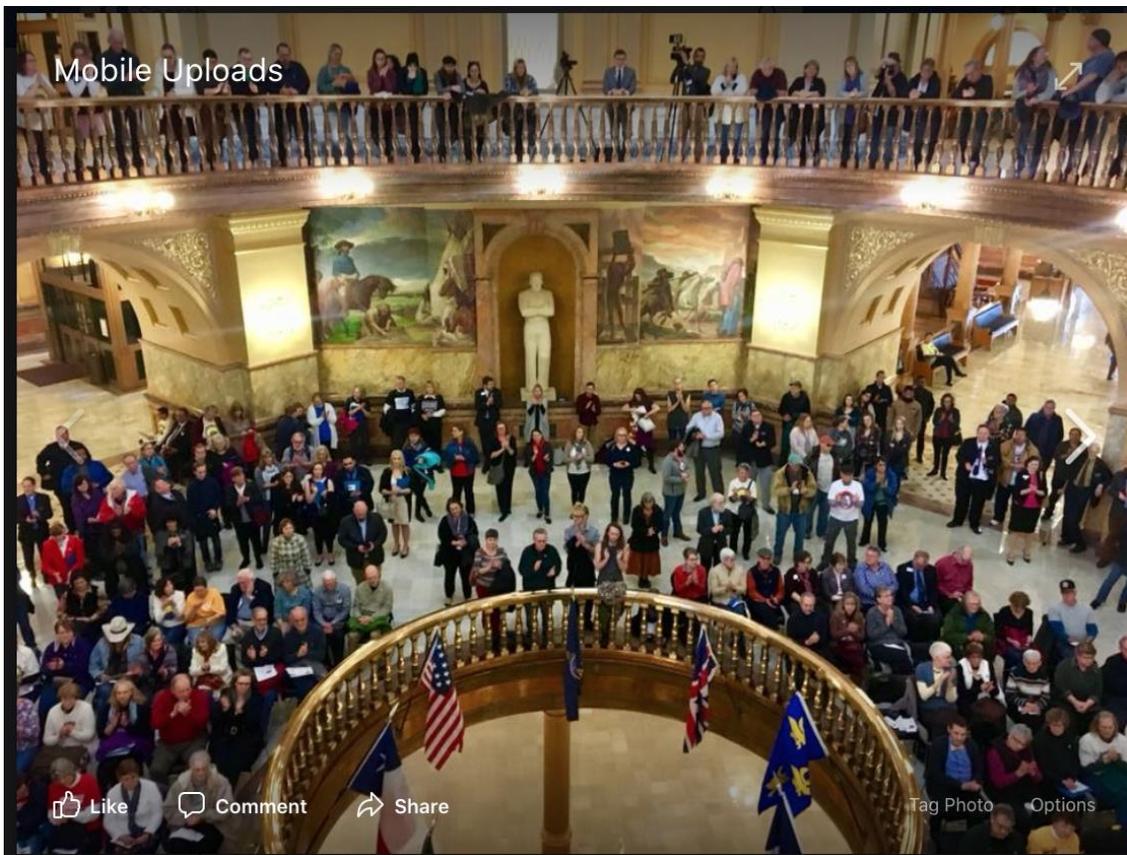
If you have had a personal experience with one of the issues above that needs my attention please contact my office.

## Special Events

Last week I met with members of the Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice (MAPJ). Twenty- seven members of MAPJ and 300 other citizens came and took part in The Kansas People’s Rally held at the Capitol Building. The rally featured speakers who discussed hot- button topics such as:

- Health Care
- Voting Rights
- Education
- Gun Policy
- Gay Rights
- Racism
- Religious Freedom
- Immigration
- Indigenous Injustice
- Child Protection

I always enjoy speaking with organizations and individuals from my district. If you would like to schedule a meeting with me please contact my Office Assistant Dixie Sypher: 785-296-7657



## Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice

### Keep in touch

It is a special honor to serve as your state representative. I both 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](mailto:sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov) , or [www.sydneycarlinforkansas.com](http://www.sydneycarlinforkansas.com). You can also follow the legislative session online at [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org)

***Proudly representing you in the Capitol***  
***Sydney Carlin, 66<sup>th</sup> District***