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**Week #3 Newsletter**

**January 28 - February 1, 2019**

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## **Page Information**

If you have a student that would like to be a page for the Legislature, please contact my office at 785.296.7657 or via [email](#). Dates are available in February and March. To serve as a page you must be 12 years of age or older.

## **Kansas Day**

On January 29, we celebrated the 158th Kansas Day at the Capitol with a variety of festivities, including singing "Home on the Range" on the House floor. Although we won't be nominated for a Tony award anytime soon, we believe we did a good job. The holiday is celebrated annually on January 29 to commemorate the anniversary of the state's 1861 admission to the Union. It was first celebrated in 1877 by schoolchildren in Paola.

## **General Outlook**

This week was full of agency presentations about things that are "broken" in Kansas and need repair. However, I have been impressed with the positive attitude emanating from the Governor, her staff, and the new agency appointments made. They will be making changes as rapidly as possible, but it will not be an easy task. We need the voters to stand with us, as we make tough decisions recovering from years of neglect and budgetary disasters, triaging the "urgent" over the "important."

## **State of Kansas 2018 Debt Study**

The Kansas Development Finance Authority released its [2018 study](#) this week:

- State, tax-supported debt has increased by more than 40% in the past four years.
- Statewide totals now surpass \$6.1 billion.
- 2017 saw ever growing levels of state spending going solely to debt servicing, \$176 million or 2.77% of all SGF revenue.
- Standard & Poor's Credit Rating Agency left our rating at AA- but did upgrade outlook from negative to stable, due to the repeal of the failed tax plan, which became effective in 2018.

## **Department of Commerce Briefing**

Acting Commerce Secretary David Toland provided [testimony](#) this week on Urban and Rural Development Initiatives across the state.

- **Promoting Employment Across Kansas Program (PEAK)** - 13,783 jobs created or retained with an average wage of \$42.21 per hour.
- **High Performance Incentive Program (HPIP)** - 43 new worksites in 2018, with 193 pending approval for future projects.
- Other programs discussed included [Rural Opportunity Zones](#), Community Development Block Grants, and the Network Kansas Loan Program.

## **Kansas Lottery Briefing**

The Kansas Lottery officials provided [testimony](#) on FY 2018 results:

- Created 8 new millionaires in the state.
- Net sales for "traditional" Lottery neared \$270million.
- Contributed almost \$75 million to the State General Fund (SGF)
- "Expanded Gaming" (casinos) opened a new facility, "Kansas Crossing Casino" in Pittsburg. These casinos have defined revenue distributions between the state, operations, and the cities and counties where they are located.
- Total casino revenue to the SGF was nearly \$89 million in FY 2018.

## **Medicaid Expansion**

On Kansas Day, Tuesday January 29<sup>th</sup>, Governor Kelly released her Medicaid Expansion bill ([HB2102](#) and [SB54](#)). The bill may seem familiar- that's because it's based on the version of the bipartisan 2017 expansion bill that passed the House and the Senate and was later vetoed by Governor Sam Brownback. Expanding Medicaid is a key priority for Democrats this session. By expanding Medicaid, it will allow our hospitals and clinics to stay open and provide access to affordable health care for 150,000 Kansans currently without insurance. Without it, rural communities are most at risk, with reports showing that 30% of our state's hospitals are considered financially vulnerable. 77% of Kansans across the political spectrum support expansion, and both Republican and Democratic-led states have had incredible results. Right now, Kansans have lost over \$3 billion of our tax dollars to other states that have expanded because we have not participated. Our tax dollars need to be coming back to us, helping our people, our hospitals, and our economy.

## **On the Senate Side**

Senator Susan Wagle, President of the Senate, has created a separate tax committee and appointed herself the chairwoman (sidelining the existing tax committee and its chairwoman, Republican Sen. Caryn Tyson). Senator Wagle's main objective is to advance [SB22](#), which bears a stark resemblance to the failed Brownback tax plan, by cutting taxes for corporations and the wealthy effectively shifting the burden onto the middle and lower classes. Kansas voters vehemently rejected the Brownback tax plan and the House

Democrats stand with our voters. The Senate Bill passed on Thursday, January 31, and is set to be debated next Wednesday or Thursday on the Senate floor. We will continue to monitor this and reject any legislation that doesn't put Kansas on a path to fiscal responsibility.

### **Equality Day**

Despite the polar vortex, Kansans from across the state gathered to celebrate Equality Day at the State House. The crowd also featured a significant amount of young students, some who hopped on school buses at 5 a.m with the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Education Network to attend. The energy was a stark departure from previous years. Governor Laura Kelly was the main speaker, she was cheered for signing an executive order to protect LGBT state workers from discrimination on her first day in office, repealing Governor Brownback's previous discriminatory order. This was a historic year in Kansas politics for the LGBTQIA community, electing 2 of the first openly gay state representatives and a congresswoman.

### **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 our community and the state government. Please contact me with your comments and questions.

My office address is Room 451-S, [300 SW 10th Avenue, Topeka, KS 66612](#).

You can call my office at (785) 296-7657, or the legislative hotline (800) 432-3924 to leave a message.

[Email](mailto:sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov) at [sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov](mailto:sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov)

Please follow [my legislative activity](#) or the [entire session](#).

**Thank you!**

**Sydney Carlin - 66th District Representative**



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**Our mailing address is:**

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Kansas House of Representatives

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