



Sydney Carlin - 66th District Representative

Legislative Update

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SB 25 - FY 2020 Budget

This session's budget process was largely guided by Governor Kelly's desire to return Kansas to budget stability and long-term fiscal soundness. I was very happy with the overall decisions made in [SB 25](#). I am proud to have helped craft a budget that better supports K-12 education, our universities, our highway system and foster care. I have visited our prisons and I have heard the Corrections Secretary explain in graphic detail the needs of the prison system. I largely support the Governor in her plan for cautious policy implementation. This will allow for a return to fiscal stability, and not one that lurches from administration to administration. Cautious spending allows more certainty for all Kansans and businesses to help with planning and long-term investments across the state.

- [Board of Regents](#)

[SB 25](#) increases funding for public universities, community colleges, and technical schools by \$33 million. These funds will provide an immediate impact on the quality of education provided for those working towards advanced education across the state. But is still shy of the \$50Million that was cut from Higher Education when we had to cut budgets the past 10 years.

Foster Care & DCF

This budget provides \$9.3 million for Governor Kelly's Families First initiative. This program will assist in early intervention for children in questionable circumstances. Programs in this plan will provide needed support for families intended to limit the need for children to be removed from their homes and placed in an understaffed, overworked foster care system. The Governor has pushed this plan from day one of her administration, and with her new Department of Children and Family Services Secretary, Laura Howard, the state will begin to recover from years of neglect and financial starvation. Children in this state will once again have the support of State resources and it will reduce suffering caused by previous tax cut policy.

[Department of Aging and Disability Services \(KDADS\)](#)

The FY 2020 budget increases funding for KDADS and this community. I was pleased some important items survived the GOP leadership revenue budget process, many that will directly impact the local Manhattan area. There is an additional \$10.2 million for increasing reimbursement rates for providers of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers. Language was included requiring the agency to make modifications to the current Medicaid HCBS program regarding treatment and enrollment for those with traumatic brain injury, no later than July 1, 2019. It added \$12.4 million in funding to increase the protected income level for HCBS and PACE (Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) recipients. Reimbursement rates for nursing facilities were increased by 1%. And \$5.0 million was added for Community Mental Health Center grants for FY 2020. These important programs will directly impact local providers like Big Lakes and Pawnee Mental Health.

- [State Employee Pay Raises](#)

- [SB 25](#) provides for an immediate 2.5% increase for all state employees. After the 2012 tax cuts, the previous administration rescinded pay increases leading to a draining of talent from state departments and agencies. The Democratic caucus and I would like to see more increases but are supportive of the Governor's plan for cautious and prudent spending based on our state economic circumstances.

- [Department of Corrections](#)

- The Governor's budget amendment called for \$35 million in new Department of Corrections funding to address the state of emergency in our state's correctional facilities. This will address staffing deficiencies, overcrowding, and outdated buildings. I have great faith in Secretary Roger Werholtz and his plans for recovery of state correctional institutions. The state has budgeted for hiring 200 new correctional officers with starting pay around \$18 per hour. I was disappointed in the House and Senate leadership's maneuvering that subjects this essential budget to complete oversight of the State Finance Council. This will only encourage further political interference in an issue that needs immediate attention. One significant issue I have with the corrections budget

concerns funding for prisoner outsourcing. After years of Republican led crises, only now are funds being allocated for recovering. There has been a push for moving inmates from state run prisons to costly private prisons. As a member of the Interim Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee I am in a good position to continue to work to limit this process. The Committee intent is to focus on ways to rehabilitate our prison facilities, attract new employees, sentencing reform to alleviate overcrowding and finding ways to expunge records that keep many people from getting a job.

- [KPERs Payments and Budget Recovery](#)
- This year through the budget and other bills, the legislature worked to return Kansas to more stable financial standing. We were able to make a years old scheduled \$115 million payment to KPERs. Transfers from the State Highway Fund were reduced by \$6.4 million after years of Governor Brownback using KDOT as a slush fund to cover his tax cut spending. Payment of loans from the state's Pooled Money Investment Board (PMIB) will be made over the next three years. Governor Kelly has assumed office with a plan for recovery and fiscal stability for the State's finances. After years of Budget catastrophes, I was proud to support her plans for sound financial planning. Some of those plans were thwarted and we will have to live with the results.

[Department of Commerce](#)

Earlier in the year, I wrote about my work on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee and our plans for the Department of Commerce's funding. I am pleased that the proposed increases to the Kansas Creative Arts Commission was maintained. This brings total state arts funding to \$500,000 per year and will once again make us eligible for NEA grants and matching funds to promote the arts and art education in Kansas. However, the Budget Conference Committee deleted an \$350,000 addition from the Economic Development Initiative Fund, which was to restore the Innovation Growth Program (which had been cut in the prior administration- the funds were used to fund the Roz -Rural Opportunity Zone program.) The program would use seed money to help turn concepts into programs and products. The Conference Committee also deleted the

\$160,000, which I had supported in my budget committee, for the Strong Military Bases Program. I was disappointed the GOP leadership did not support these essential items. I will continue to push for essential items such as this during the budget process in the next year.

[SB 67 - Governor's Veto Sustained](#)

The *final* days of the session also included attempts by the Republican leadership to overturn the Governor's veto of [SB 67](#). **This bill required** doctors to provide questionable health advice to patients regarding RU-486 reversal based on limited study and with questionable scientific basis. This procedure, its results and processes, **have not been given FDA approval**. Doctors failing to provide the specific information would face felony charges on the second event. I was proud that some of my colleagues from across the aisle voted with the Democrats in the House to sustain the Governor's veto and protect our doctors and women's healthcare in this state.

[HB 2066 - Medicaid Expansion](#)

There was much to like in the FY 2020 Budget. But, one key piece was missing: Medicaid Expansion. More than 70% of Kansans, majorities in both legislative chambers, and the Governor support expansion. On Friday, May 3rd, a strong bipartisan coalition came together to try to block passage of the budget until Medicaid expansion was debated in the Senate. This bipartisan movement upset the ultra-conservative leaders. As a result, the budget was sent back to Conference Committee, and several versions of the "Revenge Budget" emerged. The Conference Committee then began a process, much like the line item veto, to punish moderate Republicans that had voted to support Medicaid expansion. Such as extreme cuts to Higher Education and Department of Corrections pay raises. This bullying of various legislators on Friday failed, on the first day.

However, after a marathon session on Saturday, largely spent in "Call of the House" (lockdown), while GOP leaders cajoled, threatened, and browbeat those Republicans pushing with the majority of Kansans to support Medicaid expansion. By Saturday evening, the leaderships' threats to members regarding their own re-elections, restoring of some of the revenge budget cuts, and promises for prompt action on Medicaid Expansion next January convinced moderate Republicans, and our

coalition collapsed with a stampede toward budget passage and adjournment. I am disappointed that we continue to kick this debate back another year while many in Kansas remain uninsured for health. At the same time Kansas continues **lose \$2 million per day** that expansion would bring into our state. I can only hope my colleagues will hold the Speaker and Senate leaders to their commitments for rapid action when we reassemble in January 2020.

HB 2033 - Brownback Tax Plan 3.0

Governor Kelly ran first and foremost on fiscal responsibility, something so severely lacking over the last eight years that it devastated our state. The impacts of that fiscal mismanagement did not happen overnight, or in one session, or even in one year - and the resolutions to these issues will not either. I thank Governor Kelly for signing a fiscally responsible budget that gives state employees a pay raise and begins the process of restoring our state agencies and look forward to continuing to work together in moving Kansas toward a better future.

Early this session, Governor Kelly vetoed SB22, a bill that favored giant, multinational corporations at the expense of working families across Kansas. The Republican leadership plans for overriding this veto failed, as it lacked support with moderate Republicans and Democrats. A reduced version of these corporate tax cuts was resumed in [HB 2033](#). Preliminary estimates show that the bill would cost the state \$238.9 million over the next three years. While full costs of the bill are unknown, because of the hasty nature in which it was written, here are some known facts:

- Allowing the itemized deductions will cost the state \$35.5 million in FY2020, increasing to \$60.9 million in FY 2022. This option would only be utilized by 9% of Kansans, while providing **NO** tax relief to hourly and middle-class families. I would like to have seen instead, an increase in the state standard deduction – which is only \$3000.
- It reduces the tax multinational corporations pay on overseas earning from 5% to 0%, costing the state \$10.5 in FY 2020.
- The reductions on food sales tax was hype. It would not take effect immediately, unlike the corporate tax deductions. Rather it would be phased in (based on the amount of internet sales taxes collected) and may reduce the sales tax on food to 6% in 2021, and 5.4% in FY2022.

The Governor vetoed this legislation. This is not the time to spend precious dollars that we need for our states recovery on the very same kind of tax policy experiment that failed Kansas between 2012 and 2017. While I support the reduction of food sales tax, it needs to become a part of a broader tax policy, established with full debate in the legislature and putting all the best ideas out for our study. Spending state resources on tax cuts should provide meaningful tax relief to ALL Kansans. We should not try to use shell games to wave the tax cut wand in front of our constituents.

[K-12 Education Spending and the Gannon Court Case](#)

At the end of the regular legislative session in April, the House and Senate came to agreement in SB16 for public education. [SB 16](#) adds \$92.7 million in additional funding for public education across our state, in hopes of ending the years long cycle of lawsuits. This bill **increases per pupil funding**, provides for school **district capital improvements**, and increased **KPERs** employer contributions for teachers. It also provides **mandatory inflation driven increases linked to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)**. On Thursday, May 9th, the Attorney General presented oral arguments to the Kansas Supreme Court, providing an overview of new and future education spending. I hope this ends the Gannon lawsuit and any future litigation concerning how Kansas funds public education in the state.

[Legislative Process Note](#)

I was disappointed that this turned out to be one of the worst years of political maneuvering in my 17 years of service to Manhattan in the Kansas House. More than 100 bills (76 sponsored by House Democrats) were denied hearings between the two chambers. Many more were granted hearings but were not brought up for a committee vote, refused floor votes after a committee had recommended their passage, and faced further delays in the opposing chamber after passage in one of them. This was most blatantly seen in the debate over Medicaid expansion. The Senate President and Majority Leader routinely stated their opposition to the plan because it needed hearings and review, why were Senate committees not instructed to take such action during the January, February, and March dates with limited or no committee meetings and activity? I hope when we resume session next January that much of this brinkmanship ends, and that the leadership in both houses will stop focusing on future ambitions

and work in the present for the betterment of all Kansans. And maybe that all of us will follow this thought:

“A good leader can engage in a debate frankly and thoroughly, knowing that at the end he and the other side must be closer, and thus, emerge stronger. You don't have that idea when you are arrogant, superficial, and uninformed.”...

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.

during the interim – from Now to January 2020, I will be available through the legislative hotline (800) 432-3924 or via

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

Thank you!

A stylized, cursive signature of Sydney Carlin in black ink on a white background.

66th District Representative
