

Sydney Carlin - 66th District Representative

Room 451-S, State Capitol
Topeka, KS 66612
785.296.7657

1650 Sunny Slope Lane
Manhattan, KS 66502
785.539.6612

2020 Legislative Update - Week #2

January 20 - January 24, 2020

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If you, or someone you know are interested in serving as a page for the 2020 Legislative Session, please contact [me](#). I always enjoy helping kids learn more about our government and its processes. Current dates available are: February 12th, March 17th, March 25th, and April 1st. If these dates do not work with school calendars and you are interested we can attempt to book for alternative dates.

[Medicaid/KanCare Update](#)

The [Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee](#) began its hearing process on [SB 252](#) to expand Medicaid coverage and health benefits to thousands of Kansans in need. Thursday and Friday (January 23rd and 24th) brought supporters of the bill into a packed committee room. Next week, the committee will hold hearings on Tuesday (the 28th) with neutral testimony, followed by Thursday & Friday (29th & 30th) with opponents of the legislation.

I remain cautiously optimistic that this bill will finally become law under the bipartisan compromise. However, Wednesday saw [news reports](#) that some members will be attempting more stringent work requirements to the agreed upon bill. More disturbing will be if they are

successful in adding provisions for the "right of conscience" for doctors to legally refuse to provide birth control or transgender care because of religious objections. I hope the Senate will send SB 252 to the House in its current form so that we can get some of our poorest Kansans covered.

Committee Actions

Appropriations:

This week we received updates from numerous programs including the Transportation Plan, KDHE's (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) Laboratory Program, the future of the Docking State Office Building, and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact. We also received a briefing from the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund's Executive Director Melissa Rooker, who brought a troubling recognition of "childcare deserts" which is increasing in the state. Quality, affordable childcare has long been identified as a barrier to family employment, and I will be actively watching the various agency responses to address it.

The week ended with a review of the 2019 Legislative Mental Health Bus Tour, which was a three-day, 8 city event where legislators and staff toured facilities and heard from employees and patients. Among the topics were developments in mental health treatment initiatives with Kansas correctional facilities, a new 54-bed location in Wichita to provide acute psychiatric care for children ages 6-18, and youth facilities in Newton. I was most proud of the report on the newly opened adult crisis stabilization unit ran by Pawnee Mental Health in Manhattan. This 11-bed facility was opened on time in the Fall of 2019, with funds I fought hard for, and provides emergency evaluations and treatment for those in need.

Next week, will bring presentations on the status of oil and natural gas production and safety across the state and updates from the Department of Corrections and the Kansas Public Employees Retirement Systems (KPERS).

Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget

Committee action will begin next week, with enhancement requests from the Department of Agriculture, the KDHE, and the Water Office. Soon we will begin the hearing and recommendation budget process, beginning with the Department of Commerce, Board of Accountancy, the Department of Credit Unions, and the Office of the State Bank Commissioner. I will be paying close attention to Arts Funding, which we increased last year, and the results of rural incentive programs through the Commerce Department.

Agriculture

Week two brought briefings on the state of Kansas water programs and water conservation initiatives. We also held hearings on HB 2437, an act concerning labeling standards on plant based meat alternative products. This hearing was attended by members of the Kansas Livestock Association, the Kansas Pork Association, and a representative from the Good Food Institute. Proper food labeling is important, and I hope we can implement rules similar to other states, while avoiding the litigation battles currently facing Missouri and Arkansas.

Next week we will review the of price verification audit, the Kansas Water Authority's Annual Report, and a presentation on the Industrial Hemp Program. [Today's](#) Kansas Public Radio newscast, that 2/3 of farmers who participated in the new hemp program had difficulty finding buyers for their crops concerns me and will be brought up during that meeting.

[Around the Dome](#)

[Governor's Proclamations](#)

This week, Governor Kelly signed several proclamations for various days, weeks, and months. I joined my colleague Representative Jeff Pittman (Leavenworth) for the signing of his sponsored recognition of Susan B. Anthony Day to be on February 15, 2020. Next month would have been her 200th birthday, and as a dedicated supporter of women's voting rights, it was an event I was excited to attend.

Pictured (left to right) Secretary of Labor Delia Garcia, Governor Laura Kelly, Representative Pittman, and myself.



[Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute](#)

My friend, fellow representative, and office mate Barbara Ballard (Lawrence), led an annual tribute to the Reverend King, Jr. during Thursday's General Session along with Representative Jene Vickrey (Louisburg). It included essay readings, a multi-member recitation of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and ended with the entire chamber singing. If you have a moment check out the [session video](#), she has quite a voice.





Governor Kelly and myself discussing the issues of the day.

[Kansas Works - Hot Jobs Listings](#)

Attached ([here](#)) is the weekly Kansas Works Hot Jobs List for the Manhattan area. Statewide listings may be found [here](#).

[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

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

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sydney Carlin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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