

May 7, 2021

KanCare/Medicaid Expansion

It was another disappointing year for those of us who advocate for Medicaid/KanCare Expansion. Not one committee in either the House or the Senate held hearings on a program that over 60% of Kansans support, and 38 other states have adopted. Medicaid Expansion would provide financial security and healthier lifestyles for over 150,000 hard-working Kansans caught in the ACA coverage gap.

President Biden included in the American Rescue Plan weeks ago a provision for \$450 Million for Kansas to finally pass Medicaid Expansion. Estimates show this would cover the cost of expansion for several years and leave money for other programs. House Democrats brought the Medicaid Expansion to the floor as an amendment to the budget. But, sadly, only 7 Republican members joined us in responding to this urgent need for keeping all Kansans covered since their employers pay them too little and do not provide health benefits.

Hospitals are also struggling, and many are facing imminent closure. Working Kansans are not alone in needing Medicaid Expansion, our rural and community hospitals remain in dire straits. During the pandemic our over-crowded hospitals were unable to do those “elective” procedures which sustain their operations on a regular basis and much of the COVID 19 care was for uninsured Kansans. Our hospitals always take care of the sick even when it is not profitable. Hospital closings are a disaster for any community. We work tirelessly to develop our economy but have failed to protect one of the most powerful legs of a community’s economy – our health care.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee

During this session, we received positive news of the results of the long-term investments in Kansas’ air quality begun under Governor Kathleen Sebelius. A significant push away from coal fired power plants has resulted in eliminating hundreds of tons in pollution particulates from the air we breathe.

It has also made Kansas a leading producer in wind energy, bringing new sources of revenue for Kansas landowners, and thousands of jobs for our workers.

This year we passed **HB 2203** to update the Asbestos Control Program and protect its budget. This is a bipartisan approach to continue cleanup of an extremely dangerous contaminant and protect the health of those who work in the industries throughout the state.

Gun Legislation

Despite frequent incidents of mass shootings and gun violence, Kansas will now have fewer restrictions on firearms if these bills are signed into law. Persons 18 and older will be able to carry concealed firearms with training and licensure. Out-of-state residents will face less legal scrutiny because Kansas would recognize their out-of-state licenses.

I have a grave concern that many of these bills became law without the Legislature (and the House) following rules and procedures that were established in the beginning to protect our public interest in these matters. Failure to follow procedure frequently results in poorly thought out legislation.

Voting Rights

2021 began with an unprecedented assault on our nation's Capital. We saw elected officials in Washington, DC, actively work to overturn a presidential election with no evidence of voter fraud or interference and shake American's faith in our electoral process. The attacks on the voting process continued into the Capitol of Kansas in Topeka. Although Congress had already passed HR1, a republican sponsored resolution (HCR5015) was passed the House asking Congress not to support HR1(the Federal "For the People Act").

The GOP Kansas Legislature then passed **HB2183** restricting how we can assist others during the voting process. And they passed HB2332 regulating how national voter registrations groups, like the League of Women Voters, can send mailings about advanced ballots. After 2020 groups were active in getting out the vote with all eligible voters. The people were given improved access to voting and the republican party is not happy with the results. I opposed these restrictive actions and I oppose any attempt to suppress the right to vote.

Agriculture committee

As Ranking Member of House Agriculture Committee and Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee I worked with the chairs to pass several bills updating regulations and rules about pesticide disposal, egg repackaging, soil conservations districts, grain storage facility inspections and transporting Hemp from the field to the processor. The program enforcement was moved from the Department of Agriculture to the State Fire Marshall. Since the Hemp research program began, we have heard from the public about streamlining the process for farmers and the problems in transporting the crop. I remain confident Kansas farmers will adapt their operations to include this new crop and enjoy the economic benefits for our agricultural economy.

Appropriations committee/Budget

This session we were final able to properly fund necessary programs that suffered under the previous administration's tax cuts. Some programs of interest of the Manhattan area are:

- *Funding from the State Water Plan for water injection dredging at Tuttle Creek Lake.
- *Added new full-time positions at the Board of Indigent's Defense Services to address staffing shortages for public defenders and increased the hourly rate for some cases in order to retain quality defense attorneys.
- *Increased the provider reimbursement rates for Home and Community Based Services for the I/DD community.
- *Increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing facilities.
- *Increased Community Mental Health Center Grants.

The final Omnibus budget was decided yesterday on the last day of the session. It includes appropriations for all the legislation that was passed this year plus several items that were held back from the first budget bill while we are finalizing our revenue estimates for FY2022. Some of the items in that final budget bill included:

*\$53Million for higher education to meet our maintenance of effort protecting our Federal Education Support from K-12– Higher Education. This is one-time money and must not be used to supplant the budget. It will be allocated to:

- * scholarships and remote reimbursement payments

- *Technical Colleges

- *Comprehensive grants to students

- * Board of Regents

- *Washburn University and Community Colleges

- * \$65 Million for a New KDHE Lab to be built in Topeka

- *120 Million for the Docking Building Restoration

- * pay raises for the Judicial Branch – after years of negotiations with the Senate.

- * a 150% increase in the Protected Income Level for seniors on Medicaid

- * Funding to begin an Arbuckle study in Wichita area

- * \$850,000 for water injection dredging for Tuttle Creek Reservoir

* If KDOL payment delays affected your credit rating, KDOL will provide information to you to assist in credit report issues

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April 10, 2021 Dear Friends and Constituents,

Last year was extremely difficult. As we begin to recover from the COVID global pandemic physically, emotionally, and economically it is more important than ever to have common-sense policies for good government. Some of us didn't make it through the pandemic. Millions of Americans are being vaccinated every day. But before the world economy recovers, millions and millions of people in third world countries must also be vaccinated. We are not free unless we are all free. Thinking back on the eradication of the polio virus and the tremendous benefits that brought to so many families who had members succumb to or be paralyzed from it. I thank

God every day for the blessings of science and medicine in providing a way for us. Masks, social distancing, and handwashing + vaccination is our way out. I am looking forward to a fabulous recovery and seeing everyone this summer.

Sydney Carlin Proudly Representing the 66th District

\$53 million for higher education and waiver

\$10 million scholarships/remote reimbursements and payments

\$4 million for Technical Colleges

\$8 million for C grants

\$15 million to the Board of Regents

\$665,000 for Washburn University

\$5 million for community colleges MOE/MDE (?)

KDHE Lab - \$65 million

Docking Building - \$120 million

With Recommendations to the state building committee

Pay raises-

Judicial salaries 5% boost for 2 years

Non-Judicial staff maximum of 12%

PIL – 150-300% SS Income

\$43.00 million

Hope Ranch - \$300,000

Contract Tracing

Vaccine Passport

Proviso on Labor

\$541 million ending Balance for Kansas 6.7%

SPARK process for ARPA

MOE

\$60,000 Arlbuckle Study

\$850,000 – Dredging Tuttle Creek