Making Government Work For The People Again
What Kansas needs is a government that transcends partisan politics and is solely dedicated to serving Kansans. What we’ve had in Topeka is a government dedicated to serving itself and shutting out Kansas citizens from the problem-solving process. The Brownback/Colyer administration had a closed-door policy to anyone who disagreed with them ideologically. They avoided hard decisions, transparency, and accountability – fearing any sign of weakness would create a political opening for the other team. We Kansans are at the cusp of reclaiming our state from further damage by political tribalism and nationally driven agendas.

To fix our problems and build a platform for moving into the future, we need to engage everyone regardless of political stripe. We can become a shining example of what a state can do when its public and private sectors, and, most importantly, its citizens pull together to build a better future. We will become a place where working together constructively is the status quo.

My job, and my promise, is to do my part in making our government an effective leader of this effort and to ensure that it works for, and is accountable to, all Kansans. To do this, we will need to innovate in a number of areas and hold ourselves accountable to achieving improved outcomes.

Personally, I will work every day to ensure that Kansans are involved in their government again and that we build a culture of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. The answer isn’t more government or less government – rather it’s a better government that serves Kansans, not party bosses and special interests.

**We will show that Kansas is, once again, a shining example – the place where great things happen first!**

**My Plan**

I will employ a collaborative and open approach to leading Kansas into the future that ensures our government is working for the people, not special interests or national party agendas. We will leave behind the political animosity and partisan gridlock that has been holding us back for far too long. I will focus on the following four priorities to make sure that the government of Kansas is working for the people again.
A Government that Serves and Listens to the People

I’ve spent my life in the private sector. I’ve been involved in big companies and small ones. I’ve built successful start-ups and turned around failing businesses. One of the things I’ve observed in successful companies, regardless of their size or stage of development, is they all generally have senior management teams that listen – to their employees, their customers, their peers, and even their competitors. They also encourage diverse and sometimes dissenting points of view.

My promise to the people of Kansas is that the Governor’s office will no longer be walled off from the public. It will no longer only be open to people who agree with the Governor, but will actively work to involve all Kansans. To that end, I intend to do the following seven things:

I will hold weekly breakfasts that will be open to any representative or senator in Topeka. I want the people’s elected representatives to feel like they can express their constituents’ concerns directly to me.

I plan to institute weekly office hours for the Governor, where any Kansan can make an appointment to speak directly to me, either in person or on the phone. I realize the demands on these hours may require Kansans to wait several weeks before getting time with me. I believe, however, this an essential step to involving Kansans again in their government.

I will hold monthly telephone town halls open to all Kansans and shared across multiple platforms. Kansans will be able to directly engage with me – ask questions, provide input, and become a part of the solution in Topeka. This will allow us to bring government directly to the people of Kansas.

I realize a few of our government agencies can also have an outsized impact on our citizens’ lives, and often leave them with little recourse should they feel they have been treated unfairly. To help rectify this, I will add citizen advocates at the Department for Children and Families (DCF), the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), and the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE). All of these citizen advocates will report directly to me.

Kansas runs one of the most secretive state governments in the nation, and its secrecy permeates nearly every aspect of service, The Star found in a months-long investigation.

- From the Kansas City Star Investigative Series ‘Why So Secret, Kansas?’
I will ensure the 1,000-plus gubernatorial appointees reflect Kansas with full participation of women, minorities, and all geographic regions. I think this is one of the best ways to make sure our government represents and serves all Kansans. The priority will not be political party patronage but to actively involve the citizens of Kansas.

I will simplify our regulatory processes to unburden Kansans. All regulatory agencies will be subjected to Legislative Post Audit review to improve cost efficiency and time effectiveness. I will make it easier to work in Kansas by cutting red tape and bureaucracy. The Kansas Administrative Regulations will be subjected to periodic review to eliminate wasteful and ineffective rules, policies and procedures. Our state licensing boards will also be subject to periodic review based on input from the people they are licensing.

Finally, I will seek out opportunities to streamline and reinvent government services around quality services to our customers – the people of Kansas. Having done this in the private sector, I realize it’s hard work. Once we make service a priority in our culture, it will pay big dividends for the citizens of Kansas.
Accountable, Transparent Government

In the private sector, the scorecard is pretty clear. Accountability is delivered through monthly profit and loss statements. It’s hard to avoid the truth for long. In the public sector, however, we often avoid accountability because there aren’t clear goals. It’s also easy to play the blame game in the public sector – pointing to things out of our control or ignoring inconvenient facts, or even making sure the facts aren’t made public. We will end that. We will run a government that is fully transparent in every way possible to all Kansans.

First and foremost, we will create an annual report that tracks our performance and make it available to all Kansans through online publication. Each and every one of our Departments will have clearly defined goals that they are trying to accomplish. Transparency in government is often thought of in terms of public information requests, records retention policies, and what type communication devices are being used. While those things are important, it’s critical that we also focus on transparency of results. Are the hard-earned dollars that Kansans have entrusted the state with being used prudently? Are we getting sought after results? The answers will be clear and available to the public in my administration.
I also intend to put in place a Chief Performance Officer who will be focused exclusively on making sure our government is delivering results to the citizens of Kansas. Departments that aren’t meeting their goals will get extra attention. Plans will be put in place to get poorly performing areas of state government back on track. Programs that are consistently under-performing will be modified or eliminated.

In May 2018, it was reported that the Brownback/Colyer administration ignored competitive bidding requirements in over 1,000 instances on contracts over $10,000. This is simply unacceptable. Competitive bidding requirements are put in place to ensure government contracts aren’t used as bribes to repay political contributors. My administration will adhere to competitive bidding requirements except in instances of emergency. Any such instances where we didn’t use the competitive bidding process will be publicly disclosed.

I also plan to increase transparency in the legislative process. While the leaders in both chambers of our legislature have acknowledged that changes need to be made, I intend to help them accomplish the transparency that Kansans deserve. The process of introducing bills anonymously has to end. Kansans deserve to know who’s introducing legislation so that they can examine the motives behind a bill. I won’t sign any bills placed on my desk that don’t have an author attached.

I’d like to see increased transparency in legislative committees and agency proceedings. All major votes in all committees should be recorded. We should also put committee meetings online, particularly when public testimony is being offered. I will provide funding to offer “live stream” broadcast of legislative and government agency proceedings.

I will further propose more funding for enforcement of the Kansas Open Meetings Act and Kansas Open Records Act.

“"In the past decade, more than 90 percent of the laws passed by the Kansas Legislature have come from anonymous authors.

- From the Kansas City Star Investigative Series ‘Why So Secret, Kansas?’
Reclaiming our Government from Special Interests

We will ensure that in Kansas our government is of the people, by the people, and for the people – not deep pocket special interests. My goal is to allow all Kansas citizens to fully participate in our democracy. We also need to make sure that we fully understand who is trying to influence voters. If money is being spent on elections in Kansas, our citizens should be entitled to know who is spending that money.

To bring fairness and transparency to Kansas, I am proposing the following changes:

First, we should prohibit registered lobbyists from making or bundling contributions for state campaigns. Providing information and helping lawmakers understand the consequences of bills they are considering is a completely legitimate function. Lobbyists who are trying to persuade our lawmakers to vote a certain way on bills, however, shouldn’t be able to buy that vote with a campaign contribution (or a bunch of them). Kansas is not for sale!

“I will not accept one dime from corporations, lobbyists, or PACs. I’m not for sale.”

In addition, we should require full transparency of all political donations in Kansas, including money that is donated to independent expenditure organizations. Kansans have a right to know who is trying to influence their elections. We should also make sure that the ultimate donor is identified and not allow contributors to be shielded through shell companies and other cloaked schemes.

I will also propose legislation to prohibit lawmakers, appointed officials and senior staff members from registering as a lobbyist for 3 years after leaving office. Public service shouldn’t be a stepping stone to a high-paying career lobbying your former colleagues. This prohibition will apply fully to the senior level appointees in my administration.
In order to give all Kansans the opportunity to fully participate in our elections and make sure every vote counts, I will also propose the following reforms:

**Major political parties that refuse to allow unaffiliated Kansans to vote in their primaries, should reimburse the state and the counties for the costs of supporting their closed primaries.** Kansas is one of only 14 states that close their primaries to unaffiliated voters. The courts have consistently ruled that parties are private political organizations, and, therefore, can decide who gets to vote in their primaries. If they want to shut out over 30 percent of Kansans from this important stage of the electoral process – all taxpayers shouldn’t have to pay for it.

**My proposed budget will also provide grant funding for the counties to upgrade their elections systems, and further provide funding to audit and inspect voting machines.** While much press coverage has been given to the issue of voter fraud, the greater risk to our democracy is our aging election systems.

**Finally, I will propose a constitutional amendment to establish a non-partisan redistricting commission to combat gerrymandering.** It used to be believed that voters picked their leaders. Because of gerrymandering, politicians are able to pick their voters. While Kansas has a judicial review process that allows for some accountability in the redistricting process, a better approach would be to take this vital function out of the hands of politicians altogether. It’s the best way to ensure real representation and make sure every Kansan’s vote counts.
A Culture of Involvement, Innovation, and Common Sense

In my private sector experience, the most important element of successful businesses are great employees. Engaged and excited employees serve customers better. They are constantly looking for ways to make the company better. They innovate. They solve problems. They think outside the box.

Very few companies thrive by demeaning their employees. Yet some people want to vilify our public-sector employees. We will never have the government that we want if we treat our employees that way. We will involve our state employees in the process of making government more effective and accountable. We will make sure they have the tools and support systems to solve problems and enhance growth. We will make sure they are valued.

Traveling the state, I’ve had the opportunity to speak with many state employees about the culture that the Brownback/Colyer administration cultivated. The story I hear is pretty consistent throughout the state – employees are discouraged from thinking independently. We will change that by appointing leaders who embrace different points of view. We will also establish ongoing communication channels with state employees around opportunities for improvement and innovation.

We will reinforce that culture of innovation by identifying the public servants throughout our government whose ideas and actions have made Kansas Government more effective through delivering better results, saving money, or innovating in a way that sets Kansas apart. In general, state employees who have a major, positive impact on Kansas will be recognized and rewarded.

We will also work to break down barriers and impediments to new ideas. In my private sector experience, the best ideas are often ones that you “borrow” from a competitor. We need to recognize that many of the problems we are trying to solve have already been solved by someone else. I will look for ideas from every direction and won’t automatically reject an idea because of its source. We will engage with non-profits and other solutions oriented organizations. One of my goals will be to bring a policy lab to Kansas. Policy labs in other states bring together our public universities, charitable dollars, and executive branch leadership to make fact-based decisions about policy solutions.
Finally, I will bring the best and brightest people into state government to serve Kansans. Instead of picking my cabinet from a group of politically loyal Democrats or politically loyal Republicans, I will make all appointments based on merit and competence. The Governor’s Appointment Secretary will be assisted by an Appointment Advisory Committee to identify the most qualified candidates. Partisan affiliation will never be a consideration.

I will also ensure that government leadership reflects the diversity of the Kansas population. As Governor, I will appoint an equal number of women to senior positions. We will also leverage our great Regents University schools of public administration to rebuild our departments – many of which have been decimated by years of indiscriminate budget cuts due to the failed Brownback/Colyer tax experiment.

Most of all, this is devoted to a central idea of my candidacy: to return the operational sovereignty of Kansas government to its rightful rulers – the people. We can never reclaim the future we wish without the active understanding, insights and participation of Kansas citizens. We need to make Kansas government “our government” not “that government.” Ultimately, the success of building a better Kansas rests on a partnership with the people as well as their representatives.