



Capitol Briefing



My Committees
Taxation
Transportation
Economic Dev &
Tourism

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Representative 16th District

Growing Concerns

Since the start of the legislative session in January, the House has recorded six final action votes. Within the same time frame in 2007 and 2006, that number was over 20.

I am frustrated by the lack of balanced attention to critical issues on the House floor. To date, the Holcomb debate (see below) has dominated the legislative session. I fully agree that the energy issue deserves a serious discussion, but it cannot be the only discussion. The legislature has a responsibility to address other critical issues on which Kansas families expect progress in 2008. This includes expanded health care, quality education for your children and affordable housing, to name a few.

With only 90 days to accomplish our work and 30 of them already gone, legislators cannot afford to waste any more time. The energy debate must continue, but other urgent problems facing Kansans will go unresolved for another year if legislative leaders continue to funnel all attention on one topic.

As we move into week five, I will continue to explore opportunities to “rebalance” the conversation in the Capitol.

If you would like missed back issues of my 2008 ENews sent to you, call my office at 785-296-7698.

Other Session News

On January 31st, the new attorney for the people of Kansas was sworn in. Stephen Six, a Lawrence resident and Douglas County state district court judge, was sworn in as Kansas attorney general by his father, retired Kansas Supreme Court justice Fred Six. His wife, Betsy Brand Six held the Bible that Six used to take the oath of office and three of his young children stood close by. Six took the oath of office while surrounded by family, friends and top political figures, including Governor Sebelius, during a ceremony in the Kansas Senate chamber.



“As attorney general, I promise to serve with integrity and independence as I face the challenges ahead,” Six promised. Six was chosen by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to replace Morrison who was elected to the office in 2006.

Six, 42, will serve the remainder of Morrison’s term, which runs through 2010. Six has not said if he will seek election, but indications are that he will. Six received his law degree from Kansas University in 1993 and then went on to be plaintiff’s attorney for Shamberg, Johnson and Bergman law firm in Johnson County. He was appointed district court judge by Sebelius in 2005. Six and his wife, Betsy, have four children.

On January 30th, a bill aimed at paving the way for two coal burning plants was introduced in both the House and the Senate. We gathered for the regular session at 11:00 a.m., did the prayer and pledge of allegiance, then a recess was called and the Democrats and Republicans went to separate caucuses to be briefed about an energy bill that was just read in that day. The bill had not been printed or sent to committee or been the subject of a hearing. That afternoon the Senate did the same, except the Ds and Rs met together. What is the big deal? Well, the state would impose its first limits on carbon dioxide emissions but, at the same time, allow two new, coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas to get another shot at approval for permits and change the rules governing the approval of those permits.

The controversy came to a head in October 2007 when Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Roderick Bremby rejected the two 700-megawatt plants, citing concerns about carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius backed his decision. Previously, U.S. Supreme Court ruled that CO2 is a pollutant, under the Clean Air Act, and directed the EPA to regulate it. The EPA has so far not done so and is said to be studying the problem. It was that SCOTUS decision which in part prompted Secretary Bremby of the KDHE to arrive at his original ruling. Since then, the plant developers, Sunflower Electric Power Corp. and their supporters, who include legislative leaders, have mounted a furious push to reverse the decision. Supporters of the plants say the units will be among the cleanest coal-burning plants in the nation and provide an economic shot in the arm to western Kansas.

The CO2 standards in this bill HB 2711 would apply to new electric generating plants and would make Kansas among a growing number of states attempting to address global warming, which has been linked by scientists to greenhouse gas emissions. The proposal also would facilitate Sunflower Electric Power's building of two coal-fired plants outside Holcomb. The utility's \$3.6 billion project enjoys bipartisan support among legislators from western Kansas.

Senate Utilities Committee Chairman Jay Emler, a Lindsborg Republican and one of the bills' authors, said "We understand that there are people who would love to cram the Holcomb plant down everybody else's throat, and there are people who would love make sure that Holcomb is never built. If we're going to do what's best for the state, it's somewhere in between those two, obviously."

On the other hand, opponents decry the environmental and health effects from 11 million tons of annual carbon dioxide emissions, while 85% of the energy produced will be transmitted to out-of-state customers. Across the nation, western and northeastern states have launched regional programs to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Last year, Florida's governor signed an executive order requiring utilities to use more renewable resources to generate electricity. The Kansas legislators who support the bill said it proposes what would be the first state laws to tackle emissions by utilities. Their CO2 standards would apply to new plants no matter what fuel they burned. They also point out that existing coal burning plants in Kansas are aging and pollute far more than the standards in the bill. The bill would require replacement plants to comply with the more stringent standards.

The initial standards for coal-fired plants would be set lower than emissions for any existing plant and would require new plants to become more efficient as time passes. The standard would be 20% lower after a plant's first year in operation and 30% lower after 10 years. However, utilities could emit more carbon dioxide than the limits if they offset their carbon emissions by investing in renewable resources, conservation programs or technology to capture and store CO2 emissions. A utility that didn't reduce CO2 emissions would start paying a \$3-per-ton tax known as a "carbon tax."

This summer, I sat on the Energy, Natural Resources and Environment Interim Committee which made recommendations on energy efficiency for new state buildings which are also included in this bill. The bill also would set energy efficiency standards for state vehicles; require utilities to allow customers to reduce their bills by using solar power; and set up a new commission to study issues surrounding electric generation.

One controversial component of the bill prohibits the Department of Health and Environment from using emergency protection powers in the air quality permitting process, even if the Secretary determines that emissions present a substantial endangerment to health or the environment. It would also keep the Secretary from imposing emissions standards tougher than those imposed by the federal Clean Air Act without legislative approval. Presently, Kansas has delegated authority to regulate air quality as long as our standards are at least as stringent as federal environmental regulations allow.

It is important to point out that the proposal addressing the top environmental issue of the legislative session was written in a closed-meeting process by those who support construction of the two coal-burning power plants in western Kansas. Tom Thompson, a lobbyist with the Kansas chapter of the Sierra Club, which opposes the plants, said he didn't think that was right because "it was not an open process." House Bill 2711 and Senate Bill 515 essentially would allow an avenue for the two 700-megawatt plants to be built, even though permits for the plants were rejected last year by the KDHE secretary.

The four legislators involved in drafting the bill were state Rep. Carl Holmes, R-Liberal, chairman of the House Energy and Utilities Committee; state Sen. Jay Emler, R-Lindsborg, chairman of the Senate Utilities Committee; state Rep. Annie Kuether, D-Topeka, the ranking minority member of the House committee; and state Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington, ranking minority member of the Senate committee. “The four of us have worked on this off and on since November,” Emler said. The four also are members of the seven-member Kansas Electric Transmission Authority. Under the state open meetings law, meetings with a majority of a quorum of a public board must be public. A quorum on the Transmission Authority is four members and a majority of a quorum is three members. But Emler said public notice wasn’t necessary because the officials weren’t working on KETA business.

Emler and other supporters of the new legislation described it as a groundbreaking compromise that would limit carbon dioxide emissions. They said they gave in a lot to environmentalists on several issues. But Thompson asked how it could be a compromise when environmentalists and other opponents weren’t invited to the table. Emler and Lee said the plants’ developers, Sunflower Electric Power Corp., had input into the legislation. Emler said although environmentalists weren’t part of the team working on the bills, their input was part of the process through the work and research of legislative staff.

Update: Last week, the House Energy and Utilities Committee heard 8 hours of testimony on HB 2711. On Friday, Speaker Neufeld reportedly ordered Chairman Carl Holmes not to work the bill. At this time, the bill remains in the committee with its future uncertain.

Below are points made by proponents and opponents during testimony last week:

Proponents:

- The design for the Holcomb plant would make it the cleanest coal-fired power plant in Kansas by incorporating a number of new technologies
- Increased transmission capacity built for the plant would enable more wind production
- During construction, the Holcomb project will bring over 2,000 craftsmen during the construction phase and several hundred permanent jobs for local workers after plant completion
- The Holcomb project will bring millions of dollars of investment to the local economy and across the state
- In the last 10 years, Kansas has moved from being a net exporter of energy to a net importer, requiring additional electrical generation capacity, which would be changed with HB 2711
- The Holcomb plant will make Kansas a leading energy exporter in the Midwest and further create electric generation from solar, biomass and other emerging energy technologies developed in efficiency and conservation programs
- Decisions to regulate carbon dioxide should lie within the legislature, similarly to 26 other states
- The proposal will, for the first time, open up Colorado markets to Kansas power
- According to the United States Census Bureau, world energy demand will increase by 20 percent by 2025, further increasing need for HB 2711

Opponents:

- The bill will overly increase regulatory requirements and introduce new layers of unpredictable complexity into an administrative legal system. In particular, the creation of an emissions cap and a carbon penalty only increase government bureaucracy
- The bill was unethically written to change Kansas law with an intent to provide an avenue for Sunflower Power to build two new coal-fired power plants
- The legislature is not under obligation to act on the Holcomb decision, and an insistence to do so only complicates the situation. HB 2711’s wide-ranging authority increases the risk of a “constitutional collision” between the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government
- Congress is in the process of passing major federal legislation to require a reduction in overall CO2 emissions (between 60-80 percent from current levels) by 2050. Two 700MW coal-fired power plants that emit more than 11 million tons of carbon dioxide each year will make it difficult for Kansas to comply with upcoming federal climate-change regulations.
- HB 2711 fails to recognize the economic value and long-term importance of renewable energy to the Kansas economy. Kansas needs comprehensive energy policy and planning to prepare Kansas to capitalize on its natural resources, not a “quick fix” for fast energy that will do more damage to the state in the long-term

The Governor's Compromise:

- The Governor believes standards must be set higher than the minimum standards. Under the current bill, any coal plant applying for a permit and meeting the very minimum standards established by the EPA could be granted a permit, regardless of Kansas' energy needs.
- The Governor does not support the "carbon dioxide emission offset act" because it needs scientifically-based, verifiable, additional, permanent, and enforceable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, or increases in biological sequestration, which currently do not exist in HB 2711.
- The Governor believes the bill's proposed low monetary penalty for failing to offset (\$3 per ton), offers no incentive to invest in real offsets and is not in line with the \$20-30 estimates made by utility companies or financial analysts, or contained in any proposed Congressional legislation.
- The Governor does not support revoking the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Environment of his critical authority to insist that coal plants meet more stringent standards than those established by the federal agencies to protect the health and environment of Kansans.
- The Governor encourages increased commercial wind power and transmission development in Kansas
- The Governor wishes to join 36 other states in development of a comprehensive climate change action plan. This would involve an open discourse among distinguished citizen leaders from business, environment, government and other key sectors of our state economy, in addition to a partnership between the Executive and Legislative branches.

District Court finds that gaming law is constitutional. In the 2007 Kansas Legislative Session, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 66 enacting the Kansas Expanded Lottery Act (KELA) authorizing a state-owned and operated lottery involving lottery and racetrack gaming facilities. KELA contains a provision stating that any action challenging the constitutionality of SB 66 shall be brought in the Shawnee County District Court. While the action was originally filed in the Kansas Supreme Court (August 23, 2007), the Supreme Court transferred the case to the Shawnee County District Court (State ex rel. Paul Morrison v. Kansas Lottery and Ed Van Petten, Case No. 07-C-1312). The law required the attorney general's office to file a friendly law suit to test the constitutionality of the law. Proponents of gaming expansion wanted court approval so that investors would be assured that gaming would not be overturned later. The Attorney General argued that the law only allows the state to regulate casinos, not operate them, since the state will contract with private businesses to operate the casinos.

Kansas District Court Judge Charles Andrews ruled on February 1, 2008, that the KELA, as enacted by the 2007 Kansas Legislature, is constitutional. Judge Andrews' decision concluded, among other things, that "the state owns and operates the lottery because it has complete power over the casino manager from manager selection through the manager's daily activities." In addition, the stated that the lottery owns and operates the game of chance at any new casinos by owning the software and has complete control over the games played. Also, the lottery owns and operates the consideration that is paid by controlling the daily revenue procession and distribution.

The judge's decision is the first step to achieve the establishment of four state-owned casinos and slot machines at horse and dog tracks. The decision is now likely to be appealed to the Kansas Supreme Court. A legal question may be raised about "standing" of opponents of casinos to appeal the district judge's decision because they must prove that they are "harmed" by the law before the court has jurisdiction. The Constitution does not explicitly mention standing to sue or to appeal. The U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted Art. III to limit judicial power to settle controversies when the plaintiff can prove they have suffered injury (individually) caused by the law that will be redressed by the decision requested of the court. The Attorney General was given standing in the district court by the legislature in the gaming law.

Kansas ranked 20th in healthcare reform.

Where you live in the U.S. matters when it comes to health, according to a state-by-state comparison released in June. Some said the dramatic variations in care and system performance revealed by the report show it is time for universal health coverage nationwide. Others said it showed that if the weaker performing states could learn from the best, the difference would be counted in thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

Karen Davis, president of the Commonwealth Fund, the non-profit group that sponsored the report titled "State Scorecard on U.S. Health System Performance" said, "If all the states could do as well as the top states, 90,000 lives could be saved annually, 22 million more adults and children would have health insurance and millions of older adults, diabetics and young children would receive essential preventive care."

In most of the 32 indicators used in the report, Kansas ranked somewhere in the middle, earning it an overall rank of 20 among the 50 states. But had it matched the top performing states, according to Commonwealth authors:

- There might have been 520 fewer premature deaths;
- 62,055 more adults and 11,237 more children here would have health insurance;
- 29,576 more adult diabetics would have received recommended services; and
- Almost \$90 million would have been saved from the elimination of unnecessary hospitalizations.

Kansas earned its best ranking, 10th in the nation, for the relatively low number of children who are uninsured. It was one of the worst states for the percentage of heart patients given written instructions when discharged from the hospital. It also ranked poorly, 36th, for its relatively high number of deaths from breast cancer. The report also indicated disparities in Kansas when it comes to race, noting a significantly higher incidence of deaths among blacks that might have been avoided with proper health care. Citing 2002 data, the report ranked Kansas 21st for its incidence of white deaths amenable to health care, but 32nd for its black deaths amenable to health care. Various earlier studies by the Kansas Health Institute have shown disparities in health care for Kansas minorities.

The top five states were Hawaii, Iowa, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine. The poorest performers were Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, Arkansas and Texas with Mississippi and Oklahoma tying for last.

The Legislature took action to restore reciprocity for property tax deductions. Some of you have written me about an increase in your Kansas withholding this year. There has been no increase in Kansas tax, so I would guess any change is due to one or both of these two factors:

One factor is that many people were finding that not enough Kansas withholding was being subtracted from their checks, so they ended up owing Kansas income tax when they filed. That situation caused the State Department of Revenue to issue new withholding guidelines to employers. Had you owed Kansas tax when you filed each year? You should end up with the same net amount of taxes paid under the new withholding rules. If you want to reduce your withholding of Kansas tax, you should check with your employer to see if you have the option to claim more exemptions.

The other factor is a new law passed by the Missouri legislature which does not allow people who work in Missouri but live in Kansas to deduct Kansas property tax from their Missouri income tax return as they had been able to do in the past. The Kansas Legislature has passed a law remedying that and hopefully, Missouri will change their law back to the way it was.

This explains the situation in better detail: Last year the Missouri legislature passed a bill prohibiting any nonresident from deducting property taxes against Missouri income tax liability. The bill affected a long standing reciprocal agreement between Kansas and Missouri to offer workers who live in one state and work in the other this benefit. I am told that the bill was aimed at Illinois on Missouri's other border where there is not reciprocal arrangement.

The House debated a bill which retains the reciprocity, but only if the state of residents of the Kansas worker allows the deduction for Kansas residents. The bill has the effect of taking away Kansas' friendly tax treatment for Missouri residents who work in Kansas unless Missouri fixes their new law.

The Missouri bill has the effect of reducing Kansas tax receipts because of the credit available to Kansans for taxes paid in Missouri. It is estimated that about 50,000 Kansans are affected by the Missouri law and state general fund revenue would decrease by \$5 million per year.

A bill fixing the new law has been introduced in the Missouri legislature and reportedly has been well received by Missouri legislators and the Governor has promised to sign it.

A Kansas legislator is requesting the state perform an audit on the economic impact of illegal immigration. Rep. Nile Dillmore, D-Wichita, said he's asking the Legislative Division of Post Audit to conduct an analysis so that any bills passed this year concerning immigrants in our state are "based on factual, objective information." The proposed study would include analyzing taxes paid to the state by illegal immigrants, the cost of social services used and the impact on labor costs and job availability. "If the state legislature is going to make a serious effort at immigration reform in 2008, then it is time to separate facts from partisan rhetoric," Dillmore said.

Numerous proposals intended to curb the flow of illegal immigrants into the state have already been filed. Some look to strip social services, such as Medicaid payments and in-state tuition, from illegal immigrants, others take aim at businesses who hire illegal workers, and others are resolutions to Congress and Homeland Security to do the federal job regulating and enforcing immigration laws.

Smoking ban proposal introduced in the Senate. Voters would decide in the November election whether to enact a smoking ban in their county, under a proposal introduced today in the Legislature. "I believe this bill will save tens of thousands of Kansas lives," said state Sen. David Wysong, R-Mission Hills, one of the sponsors of the legislation. The measure was introduced in the Senate Judiciary Committee. A hearing is expected in the next week or so. Under the measure, each county will have on the Nov. 8 general election ballot the question of whether to ban smoking in public places. State Sen. Jim Barnett, R-Emporia, who is also a physician, said, "I've already had patients tell me they are planning to stop smoking because of this bill." Wysong said allowing a county vote on the issue was the most politically expedient way in the Legislature to get a ban in place.

Hospitals join to improve cancer treatment. Kansas needs to do a better job in the fight against cancer, health leaders said yesterday. The announcement of a new alliance of hospitals with Kansas University is seen by many as a watershed moment in that fight. “We have a lot of room for improvement,” said Dr. Roy Jensen, director of the KU Cancer Center, noting that reductions in cancer seen elsewhere in the nation are not nearly as great in Kansas. But Jensen and other leading doctors said the formation of the Midwest Cancer Alliance will enhance cancer treatment and prevention statewide. “These new partnerships signify a great beginning and hope for all who are afflicted with this disease,” Jensen said.

Midwest Cancer Alliance will include Stormont-Vail HealthCare of Topeka; Goodland Regional Medical Center; Hutchinson Hospital; Mount Carmel Regional Medical Center, Pittsburg; and Kansas University Hospital, Kansas City, Kan. The alliance is aimed at increasing cancer care trials and drug development and will serve as the outreach arm of the KU Cancer Center. “Access to the latest advancements in cancer care is very important for patients who are fighting this horrible disease,” said Dr. Gary Doolittle, MCA medical director. MCA partners will have access to second-opinion and consultation services through “tele-oncology,” which will allow patients to see a KU Cancer Center oncologist without having to travel. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius says that the alliance will expand in the future to other health care organizations. “This is one of the most important things we could be involved in,” Sebelius said.

About 5,300 Kansans die annually from cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and prevention. State figures show that approximately 4,000 of those deaths are tobacco-related. Officials said the alliance will also help KU attain National Cancer Institute designation, but that was just a marker toward eradicating cancer. “Our ultimate goal is to make sure that essentially no one suffers or dies from this disease in this state,” Jensen said.

Experts presented a discussion of highway funding issues caused by better vehicle fuel economy. State and national highway officials said yesterday that policymakers need to figure out new ways to raise money to build roads - including the possibility of a mileage tax. As a member of both the House Taxation and Transportation Committees, I, along with other members of the House and Senate Transportation and Tax Committees took no action but were briefed on inadequacies in the current motor fuels tax to keep pace with transportation needs. More fuel-efficient vehicles, public opposition to increases in the gas tax and inflation have combined to reduce the purchasing power of transportation dollars at a time when the nation’s infrastructure is in dire need of repairs and expansion, officials said. “There is no question that as a nation, we are going to have to find and invest more public dollars in our infrastructure,” said Janet Kavinoky, director of transportation infrastructure with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Michael Meyer, with the Georgia Institute of Technology, said states across the nation are trying to find alternatives to supplement the fuel tax. That includes additional toll roads, inflation-indexed fuel taxes, more public-private partnerships to build roads, and mileage-based fees, such as a pilot project in Oregon that measures how much drivers travel and charges them based on that. The Kansas motor fuel tax rate is 24 cents on every gallon of gasoline.

Prepare now: Digital Television will soon be required by Federal Law. A law passed by Congress in 2006 will dramatically impact the way 150,130 Kansas residents view television, starting in 2009. On February 17, 2009, television stations across the country will complete a federally mandated transition from analog to digital television (DTV) broadcasting. Consumers have much to gain from this, including more free channels, better sound and enhanced pictures. However, 150,130 Kansas households that currently receive free, broadcast television signals through antennas- and do not pay for subscription television service- will risk losing their reception altogether unless they take easy steps to upgrade.

The law:

In the Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005, Congress set a hard deadline of February 17, 2009 for television stations to replace traditional analog broadcasts with digital broadcasts. By 11:59 p.m. on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations must switch off their analog broadcasting signals and begin broadcasting exclusively in the digital format.

How to make the transition:

Consumers will have three options for making the switch to DTV and continuing their television service:

1. DTV converter box: Purchase a DTV converter box that will convert the digital signal into analog for an existing analog television set. Converter boxes are available for approximately \$50-\$70. The federal government also offers consumers \$40 coupons for purchase of these boxes (more information below).
2. Digital TV set: Purchase a new television set with a built-in digital tuner. All televisions with a digital tuner are able to receive signals broadcast by television stations.
3. Paid service: Subscribe to cable, satellite or a telephone company/television service provider. All these services will allow consumers to receive digital television signals on their analog television sets.

Converter Box Coupon Program:

The government will help consumers with the cost of upgrading to digital. As part of the law, Congress approved a \$1.5 billion converter box coupon program to be administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Between January 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to assist with the purchase of up to two converter boxes. Coupons will be mailed to eligible households and will expire 90 days after issuance. The coupons cannot be combined to purchase a single converter box, nor can they be used toward the purchase of other products.

Also visit www.ntia.doc.gov/dtvcoupon.

Common Questions:

Can I keep my old TV set, even if it is not a digital television?

YES, you will just need to explore one of the three options above to still receive service after February 17, 2009.

How do I know if I have a digital television set?

Check your owner's manual or look for an indication that it has a built-in Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) tuner. You can also go to the manufacturer's website and check the capabilities of the set by manufacturer model number.

Is HDTV the same thing as DTV?

No, DTV is digital television. HDTV is high definition television.

Why did Congress pass this law?

Congress passed this law because DTV is a more efficient way to broadcast, and it will free up the airwaves for other services. DTV also provides movie-quality pictures and sound, more channels and free high-definition television (for consumers who own high definition television sets).

Does Kansas have to comply?

Because it is federally mandated, all states must comply with this law.

Where can I get more information about the DTV Transition?

Visit the National Association of Broadcasters' digital television web site: www.dtvanswers.com

Millions of dollars worth of medicine that might otherwise be flushed or sent to the trash bin could be made useful to low-income or uninsured Kansans under a bill heard recently by the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB 2578, which passed the House last year at 122-0, would create a prescription drug recycling program similar to programs operating in Oklahoma and at least a dozen other states. Kansas Health Policy Authority endorsed the measure, along with several other organizations.

Proponents testified that prescription medications represent thousands of dollars of waste each year. Proponents argue this bill is another small step Kansas lawmakers can take to eliminate waste and cut costs in the state's health care industry. With wide support, the bill has not faced significant opposition.

Currently, the bill would only allow adult care homes to donate most types of unsealed medications for use by the state's 33 safety-net clinics. The bill's drafters indicated they will add language to the measure to also include mail-order pharmacies to the list of approved "vendors." The bill would not allow recycling of controlled substances.

February marks Black History Month, a time to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of the African American community for their leadership, courage and contributions to society. We must never forget the sacrifice and struggle of those who pioneered the fight for equality in the United States, while also celebrating African American contributions to art, music, medicine, technology and American culture. I look forward to celebrating Black History Month in February and throughout the year. I hope you will attend an event in your area to celebrate a rich history of African Americans, who embody the heart of our American spirit: freedom, justice, strength and perseverance.

As lawmakers begin the task of reforming Kansas' health care system, we must all take personal responsibility for our health and the health of our children. If we make healthy choices, educate ourselves and do all we can to proactively reduce our risk of disease, we will significantly limit our family's health care costs. The following government websites provide the most current, reliable, comprehensive information on issues relating to health and medicine. With these free resources, you can easily take steps to optimize your health and prevent disease.

Health Finder: www.healthfinder.gov

Sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Finder is an excellent, interactive website that will help you stay informed as a consumer. In addition to consumer guides and current health news, Health Finder offers an extensive prescription drug library, including: cost comparisons, steps to safety, tips for seniors, drug interactions and health risk assessments.

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

This site provides a wealth of information for individuals in all stages of life, from infancy to elderly. CDC posts the most up-to-date tools, tips and resources- free of charge- in an effort to create a healthier world. You will find information divided not only by life stages, but also by specific populations and topics.

MedlinePlus: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

In collaboration between the National Library of Medicine and the National Institute of Health, Medline Plus serves as the “Google” of the medical field in the United States. The website offers access to online medical journals, interactive patient tutorials and the world’s largest medical library (with illustrations). Kansas is currently in the process of developing a “Go Local” project with MedlinePlus, which will be sponsored through the State Library of Kansas and Dykes Library at the University of Kansas Medical Center. According to the “Go Local Kansas” will take you, as a Kansas consumer, to information about health services in your area of the state. This includes hospitals, physicians, nursing homes, support groups, health screening providers and many others. You will be able to link directly from each MedlinePlus health topic to services related to that particular topic.

PubMed: www.pubmed.gov

Another service of the [National Library of Medicine](http://www.nlm.nih.gov) and National Institute of Health, PubMed includes over 17 million citations from Medline Plus and other life science journals. The website includes links to full text articles and other related resources. Though not difficult to use, PubMed targets the more advanced online researcher. Similar to an electronic research database that one would access from a university, PubMed provides clinical queries and special queries, links to citations of related articles and maintains the ability to store collections of citations. PubMed is designed for the consumer looking for extensive research on a highly-specific, health-related issue.

Tossing the Tobacco: It’s Up To You

You hear it over and over again: smoking kills not only you, but those around you. If you or a loved one currently uses tobacco products, dropping the habit is- without a doubt- the first and most urgent step you should take to optimize your health and prevent disease. Still, the decision to quit can only come from you. I have provided some free resources below to help you get started...when you are ready.

Freedom From Smoking: www.ffsonline.org OR 800.586.4872

Sponsored by the American Lung Association, Freedom From Smoking will help you form a plan that you will be able to maintain for life.

SmokeFree: www.smokefree.gov OR 877.448.7848

This completely free program offers an online guide to quit smoking, in addition to print materials, expert help and local referrals.

Quit Now: www.smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu OR 800.QUIT.NOW

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds this national program, though a number of stakeholders collaborate to provide the program’s services. Pharmacists, dentists, doctors, labor unions, veterans, hospitals, nurses (and more) all share an interest in reducing tobacco use in the United States. “Quit Now” offers extensive information (including online guides to quitting), links to other helpful programs and information for prescription methods of cessation.

House Page Program

Young people from the ages of 12-18 are invited to spend the day at the Capitol serving as pages.

If you would like to participate in this program, please call my office right away.

In Committees This Week:

Please feel free to let me know if you would like any further information on these bills, or would like to testify before a committee on an issue important to you. Individuals wishing to testify are required to notify the committee assistant at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Thirty-five copies of written testimony must be provided to the committee assistant by 4:30 PM on the previous day. Please note that that committee schedules are subject change at any time, so please confirm any hearing you wish to attend in advance by calling me at 785.296.7698, or checking the House Calendar at www.kslegislature.gov.

House Agriculture and Natural Resources:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Docking Room 783

Monday, February 11

Hearing on:

- **HB 2748** - Possession of wildlife; tagging of big game and wild turkey

Thursday, February 14

- Update on Kansas Meat Processors Association

Appropriations

Time/Location: 9:00 a.m. Capitol Room 514-S

Monday, February 11

- Report from State Board of Healing Arts
- Report from Board of Emergency Medical Services
- Briefing on KU Cancer Research and doctors for rural Kansas

Tuesday, February 12

- Report from Transportation and Public Safety Budget Committee

Wednesday, February 13

- Report from Social Services Budget Committee

Thursday, February 14

- Status of Bonding in Kansas:
- Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education presentation

House Commerce & Labor

Time/Location: 9:15 a.m. Docking Room 784

Wednesday, February 13

Hearing on:

- Appraisers Licensing

Thursday, February 14

Possible action on:

- Appraisers Licensing

House Economic Development and Tourism:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Capitol 519-S

Monday, February 11

- Overview of Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings and possible action on:

- **HB 2657** - Limitation on motorboats exhaust noise
- **HB 2679** - Limitation on motorboats exhaust noise requirements

House Education:

Time/Location: 9:05 a.m. Capitol Room 313-S

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings on:

- **HB 2754** - School districts; Medicaid replacement state aid
- **HB 2753** - School districts; distribution of state aid for special education and related services

Wednesday, February 13

Hearings on:

- **HB 2734** - School districts; consolidation, state financial aid
- **HB 2760** - School districts; consolidation; low enrollment weighting

Thursday, February 14

Hearing on:

- **HB 2778** - Screening and treatment for dyslexia and related disorders

House Elections and Governmental Organization:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Docking Room 784

Monday, February 11

Hearing on:

- **HB2749** - County hospitals; administrator contracts

Tuesday, February 12

Hearing on:

- **HB2718** - Secretary of State; authorization to make certain loans to counties using HAVA funds

Wednesday, February 13

Hearing on:

- **HB2747** - Municipalities; unilateral annexation; voter approval required (proponents)

Thursday, February 14

Continuation of hearing on:

- **HB2747** - Municipalities; unilateral annexation; voter approval required (opponents)

House Energy and Utilities:

Time/Location: 9:15 a.m. Docking Room 783

Monday, February 11

Hearing on:

- **HB 2638** - Location and mapping requirements for underground water facilities

Tuesday, February 12

Hearing on:

- **HB 2634** - Grant program for deploying broadband service in underserved rural areas

Wednesday, February 13

Hearings on:

- **HB 2692** - Scrap metal dealers, including stainless steel as a regulated scrap metal

- **HB 2681** - Review of regulations and laws with the intent of promoting nuclear industrial development

Thursday, February 14

Hearings on:

- **HB 2639** - Energy resources commission, establishment

- **HCR 5029** - A concurrent resolution urging Congress and the President of the United States to develop a program of capturing and storing carbon and other greenhouse gases

House Federal & State Affairs:

Time/Location: 1:30 p.m. Capitol Room 313-S

Monday, February 11

Introduction of bills

Continuation of hearings on:

- **HB 2003** - Exception allowing day care homes to have double the amount of children licensed for during limited time periods before and after school

- **HB 2053** - Licensure of child care facilities by cities, counties and school districts

Wednesday, February 13

Hearing on:

- **HB 2602** - Creating the crime of use of a controlled substance endangering a child

House Government Efficiency and Technology:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Capitol Room 526-S

*No meetings scheduled at this time.

House Health and Human Services:

Time/Location: 1:30 p.m. Capitol Room 526-S

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings on:

- **HB 2695** - Athletic Trainer Licensure

- **HB 2650** - Controlled Substances; Salvia Divinorm

House Insurance and Financial Institutions:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Capitol Room 527-S

Monday, February 11

Hearing on:

- **HB 2696** - Insurance reimbursement for certain services

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings on:

- **HB 2677** – Qualifications of credit union administrators

- **HB 2678** – Limitations on credit union personnel

Wednesday, February 13

Hearing on:

- **HB 2699** - Providing time period for insurance company to recoup certain erroneously made payments

Action on:

- **HB 2689** - Insurance; risk-based capital requirements

Thursday, February 14

Hearing on:

- **HB 2743** - Insurance; maintaining confidentiality of certain records

House Judiciary:

Time/Location: 3:30 p.m. Capitol Room 313-S

Monday, February 11

Hearings on:

- **HB 2707** - Theft, intent to deprive, leased or rented motor vehicles
- **HB 2768** - Dead human bodies, removal and delivery

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings on:

- **HB 2731** - Sentencing departure pre-sentence report, mitigating factors, departure limitations on crime of extreme sexual violence
- **HB 2732** - Sentencing, mitigating factors, departure limitations on crime of extreme sexual violence

Wednesday, February 13

Hearings on:

- **HB 2726** - Polygraph examinations prohibited for certain alleged victims
- **HB 2727** - Sexual assault, evidence

House Taxation:

Time/Location: 9:00 a.m. Capitol Room 519-S

Tuesday, February 12

Hearing on:

- **HB 2762** - Corporate income taxation changes relating to apportionment of net income, business income and surtax on corporations

Wednesday, February 13

Hearing on:

- **HB 2751** - Authorizing the option to expense investment expenditures as an alternative to depreciation in calculating income tax liability

Thursday, February 14

Hearings on:

- **HB 2500** - Property tax exemption for certain housing for certain low income mothers
- **HB 2694** - Income tax credit for alternative-fueled motor vehicle or alternative fuel fueling station

Friday, February 15

Hearing on:

- **HB 2729** - Deduction for medical care expenses for state income tax purposes

House Transportation:

Time/Location: 1:30 p.m. Capitol Room 519-S

Tuesday, February 12

Hearings on:

- **HB 2691** - Gold star family license plates
- **HB 2708** - Designating K-53 highway as the patriot guard highway

Wednesday, February 13

Hearings on:

- **HB 2709** - Regulation of micro utility trucks
- **HB 2725** - The vehicle protection product act

Thursday, February 14

Hearings on:

- **HB 2704** - "In God We Trust" distinctive license plate
- **HB 2720** - Designating part of K-10 highway as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Hwy.

The following is a list of the numbers I receive the most requests for during the legislative session. You can find these as well as many others online at <http://da.state.ks.us/phonebook>. I hope you will find this information helpful.

Adjutant General: 785.274.1001	Department on Aging: 800.432.3535	Attorney General: 785.296.2215
Better Business Bureau: 785.232.0454	Child/Adult Abuse Hotline: 800.922.5330	Child and Family Services: 785.296.4653
Commerce & Housing: 785.296.3481	Consumer Protection: 800.432.2310	Crime Tip Hotline: 800.572.7463
Crime Victim Assistance: 800.828.9745	Driver’s License Bureau: 785.296.3963	Gov. Kathleen Sebelius: 800.748.4408
Kansas Health Wave: 800.792.4884	Highway Road Conditions: 800.585.7623	Housing Hotline: 800.752.4422
Insurance Hotline: 800.432.2484	Kansas Lottery: 785.296.5700	Legislative Hotline: 800.432.3924
Mental Health Services: 888.582.3759	Department of Revenue: 877.526.7738	School Safety Hotline: 877.626.8203
Social Security: 800.772.1213	State Capitol Tours: 785.296.3966	Taxpayer Assistance: 800.259.2829
Tax Refund Status: 800.894.0318	Teacher Certification: 785.296.2283	Unclaimed Property: 800.432.0386
Unemployment: 785.296.5074	Vital Statistics: 785.296.1405	Voter Registration: 785.296.4561
Welfare Fraud Hotline: 800.432.3913	Workers’ Comp: 800.332.0353	Workforce Center: 785.235.5627

Keep In Touch

Please feel free to contact me with your additional comments and questions. My office address is Room 49, Docking State Office Building, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7698 or call the legislative hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me. Additionally, you can e-mail me at rardin@house.state.ks.us. You can also follow the legislative session online at www.kslegislature.org.