

**From:** Stan Frownfelter [Stan.Frownfelter@house.ks.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 27, 2012 8:23 AM  
**To:** Jon Males; Cindy Cash; maryr@wyandottepublishing.com  
**Subject:** Week 3 newsletter

**Representative Stan Frownfelter**  
**31 District, Wyandotte County**  
**January 16-20, 2012**

**Committees:**  
**House Energy and Utilities**  
**House Commerce and Economic Development**  
**House Taxation**

**House Democratic Caucus Newsletter**  
**Week 3: January 23-27, 2012**

From the Statehouse  
 Budget Update  
 Redistricting underway  
 Democrats' Kansas Jobs First proposal implemented by Governor  
 House takes up "sexting" bill  
 Governor Brownback's food stamp policy draws criticism  
 Business Development Act would level the playing field  
 Keep in Touch  
 Useful State Numbers and Resources

### **This Week in the Statehouse**

After two weeks of firestorm surrounding Gov. Brownback's income tax proposal, this week was relatively quiet. Committees started to dive into bills and we also ran the first bills of the session on the House floor, but overall there was no major development on any of the hot issues of the session.

On another note, Kansas celebrates its 151st birthday this week! Hundreds of school children gathered at the Kansas Museum of History on Friday to commemorate this special day (in years past this event usually takes place at the Capitol, but it has been relocated the last couple of years due to renovations).

Reflecting on our 151 years of statehood, I am reminded of all the hardships Kansas has endured throughout its history. There is no doubt that the economic recession of the last few years will be among the ranks of those significant challenges when our chapter in history is written. I hope we will live up to our heritage and continue to protect all the investments that have made Kansas so special for the last 151 years.

It's amazing how quickly time flies under the Dome. We've now completed three weeks, which means we're a quarter of the way through the regular session.

### **Budget Update**

The House Appropriations Committee had a full week of hearings this week, but activity has still been fairly mellow thus far. The week was filled with briefings from various agencies, as well as an update on the University of Kansas Cancer Center's effort to achieve national designation by the National Cancer Institute. Next week, the committee will begin working the budgets of fee-funded agencies.

Part of the slow start can be attributed to the fact that for the last three years, the House Appropriations Committee spent the first weeks of the session working on the previous year's budget, due to the economic recession. Since there is no budget shortfall this year, we don't have to spend the first quarter of the session making cuts to a budget that has already been signed into law. That is quite a relief.

Also, as I have mentioned in previously, Governor Brownback's tax plan has really been the focal point of the session so far. Any tax reform that is enacted this year will have a tremendous impact on the state general fund for years to come. Everyone is anxiously awaiting what the outcome of that debate will be.

### **Redistricting underway**

Every ten years, the Kansas Legislature is required to redraw boundaries for all congressional, legislative, and State Board of Education districts. This becomes necessary as populations shift significantly over the course of a decade.

Legislators in both chambers have been busy negotiating proposals for new House and Senate district lines. Just like a normal bill, each map must go before a committee, then be approved by the entire chamber, then signed into law by the Governor. Historically, once each chamber redraws its own lines, the other chamber does not make changes (ie, the House will not edit the map of Senate districts, and vice versa). The congressional maps are trickier, as both chambers participate in that process.

I am hopeful that we can get redistricting done as quickly and as fairly as possible. It is widely agreed that reapportionment is the ugliest thing that happens in the State Capitol. It is not uncommon for politicians to lose focus on the needs of the electorate when they start redrawing district lines. Instead, the focus tends to shift to finagling that will enable the easiest re-election bid for incumbents (or in some cases - for various political reasons - the goal is to make a district more difficult for the incumbent to win). Needless to say, the process can turn bitter very quickly.

Ultimately, redistricting is about giving the people an equal voice in their elected representation. It is not about securing political dominance or seeking political retribution against individuals with whom we don't see eye to eye. Hopefully we can all agree that we have too many other battles to fight to waste time and resources on something so blatantly self serving.

### **Democrats' Kansas Jobs First proposal implemented by Governor**

Last December, Kansas Democrats unveiled a 14-point plan designed to get Kansans off the unemployment rolls and onto payrolls. On Friday, Governor Brownback announced his intention to implement one of the our proposals.

The most significant jobs package passed by the Kansas Legislature in the last decade was the 2010 transportation plan (T-WORKS program). Three separate economic studies (each using a different economic analysis formula) indicated that the program will create 175,000 jobs over the next 10 years.

The T-WORKS program is slated to spend about \$440 million in 2012 and \$237 million in 2013 on various road projects throughout Kansas. Democrats proposed accelerating a minimum of \$50 million worth of late 2012 and 2013 projects that are ready to break ground. By accelerating the bidding process, Kansas can create thousands of jobs earlier than expected and save money by taking advantage of currently low prices on materials.

Job creation must be the first priority of the 2012 legislative session. Our Kansas Jobs First plan was a common sense, revenue neutral plan that will get Kansans back to work right away. I am pleased that Governor Brownback has offered his support. There are still several other components of our plan that the Legislature can implement to create new jobs, but this is a good start. I will keep you updated on our other jobs proposals as the session progresses. To learn more about the other proposals included in Democrats' Kansas Jobs First plan, visit [www.kansasfirst.net](http://www.kansasfirst.net).

### **House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice considers "sexting"**

On Monday, the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice held a hearing on House Bill 2467, a bill that would address the transmission of photos of minor children in a state of nudity ("sexting") with the intent to harass, embarrass, intimidate, defame, or otherwise inflict emotional, psychological, or physical harm.

The purpose of this bill is to modify penalties for minors who send nude pictures via text message or email to other minors. Under current law, instances of "sexting" are prosecuted under the sexual exploitation statute and is considered a level 5 felony.

Teenagers are usually unaware that, by sexting, they may be violating child pornography laws, which often carry felony penalties. In Kansas this would require registration as a sex offender. This bill would modify that while still protecting the children who the law is designed to protect. All 50 states have laws prohibiting the production, possession or distribution of images depicting sexually explicit activities involving a child. Many sexting cases, however, have extenuating circumstances and varying facts that parents, school officials, law enforcement officials and prosecutors must weigh when kids are discovered in such situations.

The committee had questions about language in the bill that was perceived as ambiguous. They decided to look back to a similar "sexting" proposal made in 2009 for further guidance. They have taken no action on the bill at this time.

### **Governor Brownback's food stamp policy draws criticism**

One of the most controversial stories circulating the Capitol this week centered on Governor Brownback's decision to change a policy regarding food assistance for children of illegal immigrants. Effective October 1st, low-income, U.S. children whose parents are illegal immigrants are no longer eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps).

SRS also changed the way it counts household income when determining who is eligible for SNAP benefits. The formula now includes the entire income of all members of a household. Before the change, SRS counted only a portion if one or more members did not provide proof of legal U.S. residency. Kansas is one of only four states opting to use this policy, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Of course illegal immigrants should not have access to taxpayer-funded benefits. But children of illegal immigrants who are born in the U.S. are not here illegally. They are legal citizens and they have the same rights as every other U.S. citizen. Hundreds of families have been impacted by this policy change. SRS confirmed that 1,042 households have lost their benefits since the policy was implemented. In the first month, 2,066 children were dropped from the food stamp rolls in Kansas.

Governor Brownback reviewed the policy this week after it garnered significant criticism. He reinforced his support. The Legislature has expressed its concern and its intention to also review the policy. I struggle to understand how sending innocent children to bed hungry at night will help meet Governor Brownback's goal of addressing child poverty, rebuilding the economy, or renewing the class. I hope that this is something the Legislature can rectify.

### **Business Development Act would level the playing field**

This session, legislators have been working diligently on an act to help level the playing field for a Kansas small businesses owner.

The Kansas Small and Disadvantaged Business Development Act would create a business program within the Kansas Department of Commerce that reaches out to small-, women- and minority-owned businesses. A business owner would then be given an opportunity to participate in state and post-secondary education institution contracts for goods and services.

The bill has already been introduced in both the House and Senate, and should have a hearing in either the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development or the Senate Commerce Committee in the next two weeks.

Numerous studies have shown that small businesses, women and minorities have been deeply affected by the economic recession. While women make up more than 50 percent of the Kansas population, there are currently fewer than 60,000 female-owned businesses in our state. Even fewer have a person of color at the helm – of the 237,000 small businesses in Kansas, just 14,000 are owned by a minority.

This program would make it easier for women, minorities and small business owners to find new business ventures that will result in more employment opportunities.

### **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 state government. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions. My office address is Room 725, Docking State Office Building, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7648 or call the legislative hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me. Additionally, you can e-mail me at [stan.frownfelter@house.ks.gov](mailto:stan.frownfelter@house.ks.gov). You can also follow the legislative session online at [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org).

#### **Useful Numbers and Resources:**

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.

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