

SHANNON FRANCIS

Kansas House District 125



Newsletter - April 22, 2017

It is an honor to represent you and our community in the State Legislature. Until May 1, the Legislature is on its April break between the regular and veto session. It is great to be home and hear what's on your mind. After April Consensus Revenues Estimates and April revenues are announced the Legislature will finalize its work on taxes, budget and the school funding plan.

The Good

One of my friends told me to quit talking about the bad and talk about the good. So I want to start with the positives. Leadership in the House is doing a good job. They have focused on process and collaboration. The Speaker and Speaker Pro Tem are from Johnson County but Speaker Ryckman grew up in Meade and Speaker Pro Tem Schwab grew up in Great Bend. They both understand the issues of rural Kansas. House Majority Leader Hineman lives in Dighton. Many of the committee chairs come from rural Kansas. All of the committees I serve on have Chairmen focused on the practical realities of doing what is best for Kansas. The Tax, Appropriation, and Education Budget committees are working diligently to develop the best solutions possible to correct the problems we face. I don't and won't agree with all the decisions that are made this session but I don't question the thoughtfulness and intent of the decisions being made.

Consensus Revenue Estimates for April were increased for the first time in years. This fiscal year the total estimated

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Useful Phone Numbers

Department On Aging

800-432-3535

increase in tax revenues was \$62.7 million. Last November the revenue estimates for 2017 were decreased \$345.9 million so this is a welcome respite.

Some good legislation has passed this session. Some KPERS funding was protected. With an additional axle, to spread out the weight and for braking, haulers of agricultural products will have their weight limits increased to 90,000 lbs. A bill was passed clarifying that water right impairment claims must exhaust their administrative remedies before seeking court injunctions and the bill also improved Water Conservation Area implementation. Correcting issues that have arisen from last years Juvenile Justice reform has also been the focus of several bills.

The Bad

Even with the increase in the Consensus Revenue Estimates the structural deficit of Kansas remains.

Thousands of Dollars	Revenue less transfers	Expenses	Difference /Deficit
FY2012	6,232,300	6,126,301	105,999
FY2013	6,402,119	6,134,810	267,309
FY2014	5,693,155	5,982,818	-289,663
FY2015	5,785,185	6,237,003	-451,818
FY2016	5,834,163	6,115,100	-280,937
FY2017 estimated	5,886,100	6,276,600	-390,500
FY2018 estimate	5,858,400	6,392,100	-533,700
FY2019 estimated	5,991,200	6,414,000	-422,800

Since the 2012 tax cuts were enacted general fund revenues have fallen \$446 million through FY 2016. This deficit is being made up with transfers from KDOT, the non payment of KPERS obligations, one time fund sweeps, borrowing, delaying of payments to schools and a myriad of other one time or short term fixes.

One obligation of the legislature is to develop a formula to fund our schools. The Education Committees are still

Child/Adult Abuse Hotline
800-922-5330

Child & Family Services
888-369-4777

Consumer Protection
800-432-2310

Crime Tip Hotline
1-800-KSCRIME
(1-800-572-7463)

Crime Victims' Information Referral
800-828-9745

Disability / Social Security Fraud Hotline
800-269-0271

Elder Abuse Hotline
800-842-0078

Governor Brownback Constituent Services
800-748-4408

Highway Road Conditions
1-866-511-5638
In-State Dial 511

Housing Hotline
800-752-4422

KanCare Clearinghouse
800-792-4884

Kansas Lottery
800-544-9467

Legislative Hotline
800-432-3924

working on the formula. The cost is not included in the deficit numbers in the table above and it could be anywhere from \$150 million a year beginning in 2018 to an additional \$750 million a year by FY 2022.

Our Constitution in Article 6 says: 1: Schools and related institutions and activities. The legislature shall provide for intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement by establishing and maintaining public schools, educational institutions and related activities which may be organized and changed in such manner as may be provided by law.

6(b) The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state.

The Supreme Court didn't require an amount but they did say, "Based on the demonstrated inputs and outputs, the Court concluded that the CLASS Act was "not reasonably calculated to have all Kansas K-12 public school students meet or exceed the *Rose* standards" through its implementation."

The Ugly

Two years ago House Leadership ordered an efficiency study from Alvarez Marsal. It was touted to save more than \$2 Billion over the next 5 years. While there have been some savings it doesn't appear any thing close to \$2 billion in efficiencies will be found.

The Governor has been unable to find efficiencies or grow our economy enough to balance the budget. Each budget presented by the Governor has relied on measures like across the board cuts, fund transfers, borrowing, cutting KPERS payments, selling one-time assets or delaying payments to schools.

The "Truth Caucus" in the House continues to rant about wasteful spending but doesn't come up with places to cut.

The Legislature, in its first attempt to address our deficit, passed HB 2178 which the Governor vetoed because it would have undone portions of his 2012 tax plan. The

Mental Health Services

888-582-3759

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

School Safety Hotline

877-626-8203

Taxpayer Assistance

785-368-8222

Tax Refund Status

800-894-0318

Unclaimed Property

800-432-0386

Unemployment Insurance

800-292-6333

Voter Registration

800-262-8683

Welfare Fraud Hotline

800-432-3913

Workmans Compensation

800-332-0353

House overrode the veto 85-40 but the Senate failed to override the veto by 3 votes with a vote of 24-16. The Governor supported a 4.6% flat tax bill that would have raised \$357 million in 2019, which is quite a bit below the deficit even without additional school funding. The bill failed in the Senate 37-3.

There are places we can cut spending and have cut spending. We currently have cut back road maintenance and projects by over \$400 million. We have cut the rates for Medicaid providers, including our local hospitals. We have cut funding for the senior care act. We have kept funding level on K-12 education and forced that burden more on the local property tax owner. I'm not sure these are the cuts most of us want.

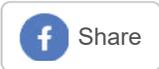
I recently voted against Medicaid Expansion because we must solve the deficit. Governing is about priorities. The state of Kansas can't just print money like they do in Washington nor should we even if we could. The cost of the bill presented to the House was \$57 million in the second year. There are ways to make Medicaid expansion revenue neutral but those components were not in this bill. Until we solve our deficit, Medicaid expansion will ultimately wind up diverting money from other programs.

“Genghis Khan reportedly said, “Conquering the world on horseback is easy; it is dismounting and governing that is hard.” Too often politicians and special interests are always in campaign mode. Campaigning is easy. Promises are cheap. In Kansas it’s time to govern.

Constituent Services

Please reach out to me regarding issues with our state government that I can help with. I do ask that you send the request to me by email. This insures that I get the information correctly to the agency we are working with. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Please contact me any time. My email is: Shannon.francis@house.ks.gov. Topeka Office Phone: (785) 296-7466 Office at the

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