

SHANNON FRANCIS

Kansas House District 125



The legislative session is almost half done

This was turn around week. What that means is, with the exception of exempt or blessed bills, a bill must be passed out of its house of origin (senate or house) by February 27th or it's dead. Like everything in life for every rule there is an exception. An exempt bill or blessed bill in the house must have passed through appropriations, tax, federal and state affairs, or calendar committee. So one of the things I am watching is which bills were blessed by the Speaker of the House. They are bills that the Speaker thinks are important enough to still be worked on this year after turn around but have nothing to do with appropriations, tax or federal and state affairs.

Most of the bills we work on are very limited in scope. For instance I carried a bill this week that allowed water transfer projects to be eligible for public water supply project loans. Another bill changed the legal process for branding deer in deer farms. Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

While we deal with the important but mundane bills that make minor changes that allow civic improvements or protect property rights; the 1,000 lb. gorilla in the room is the budget. I'm new at the process but I am quickly learning that big legislation needs time to form and build support. Today Kansas's latest revenue numbers came out and were up \$22 million. Last month revenues were \$47 million



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Contact Shannon

At the Legislature:

State Capitol
Room 167A-W
Topeka, KS 66612
shannon.francis@house.ks.gov

At Home in Liberal:

1501 Tucker Court
Liberal, Kansas 67901
sfran83384@aol.com
620-624-9571

below estimates. Hopefully today the rebound begins.

Looking Forward

Statutorily we are required to produce a budget with a 7.5% reserve, some where around \$450 million. The current plan has a \$245 million reserve in July of 2017. Education spending will be block granted and at roughly the same amount as it is today. To get to these numbers we take another \$132 million out of transportation in 2016 and 2017. This plan relies on increases to tobacco and alcohol taxes that may not pass. I have no problems tightening our belt to get through a tough time. My concern is in 2018 and 2019, to make these budgets work we have to continue to take money from transportation and there is still no increase in education funding.

Weekly Coffee Meetings

I will not be having a coffee this Saturday, February 28th instead I will be at the Legislative Update sponsored by the Liberal Chamber of Commerce on March 2, Monday 11:30 at the Depot.

Contact Info

Thank you for the opportunity to serve during these challenging times. Our rural communities are the backbone of a strong Kansas. During the session please contact me any time. My office is 167-W, my phone number is 785-296-7655 and my email is shannon.francis@house.ks.gov.

Shannon Francis

125th District Representative
Kansas House of Representatives



