

SHANNON FRANCIS

Kansas House District 125



Visitors

I was very excited to have Mica Huskey, Haley Yancy, Carlos Balderas, & Joshua Diazdeleon as pages Monday. I also want to thank Naomi Vargas and Tiffany Bottum for bringing them. I am always so proud of the youth that represent our community in Topeka.



Shannon Francis with Mica Huskey, Haley Yancy, Carlos Balderas, Joshua Diazdeleon, Naomi Vargas and Tiffany Bottum

Late last week I had the opportunity to visit with Al Shank, of Al Shank Insurance, about legislative issues relating to insurance. In particular there is a bill raising the minimum liability amount on car insurance. The issue needs to be thought out carefully so we understand the consequences.

Nick Hatcher & Tom Willis of Conestoga Energy were in town for meetings on ethanol. HB 2401 would put an excise tax of 4.33% on wind and ethanol production. At a dinner we attended with the House Agriculture Chairman Sharon Schwartz, she lamented about what feels like attacks on



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agriculture, our number one industry. SB 178 which is estimated to increase property taxes on ag land by 457% is another example.

Jack and Chris Carlile visited while they were in town for the funeral of Jack's brother, Terry. Phyllis Carlile, Jack's Mom, has a great message when asked which child is her favorite. **"My favorite is the one that needs me most."** My heart and prayers go out to the Carlile family on their recent loss.

Duane Dunn, President of SCCC/ATS, was in town for Board of Regents meetings. I was pleased when he told me that the Kansas Community College System has the highest rate in the nation of students who eventually obtain a four year degree. In 2010, Seward County was ranked 33rd among all community colleges in the nation by Washington Monthly.

At the Capitol

Senate Bill 7 which moves all educational funding from a formula to a block grant passed, after a 110-minute call of the house so leadership could bring two absent members in to achieve a constitutional majority. I voted against SB7 for numerous reasons. My biggest concern is we did away with a formula developed over 23 years and we don't know what we are going to replace it with. In my conversations with legislators from urban areas, many of them said we were spending too much on education as a whole but not enough in their district. They think we are spending too much on education for rural schools that are too small, too much to educate low income students and too much for bilingual education without results. One Johnson County legislator said, at the well during debate, that this was a vote for Johnson County, that they have 19% of the kids and paid 31% of the taxes. I would argue his math, but with urban legislators controlling the process and no funding formula in place it will be difficult to ensure adequate

funding for schools in rural Kansas. This will also provoke the courts to take action since it blatantly disregards the requirements of the Gannon decision.

During debate in committee there were only three proponents of the bill: The Kansas Chamber, the Kansas Policy Institute and Kansans for Liberty. No school entity testified in favor of the bill. More than 40 school boards, citizens and other education groups testified against it. My email from you was overwhelmingly against it. This bill is not good in the long run for Kansas. There is much about the current funding formula that needs to be tweaked, but starting from scratch is not the way to do it. Much of the current school funding formula, like second counts for schools with military bases, has developed over years of experience.

Senate Bill 45 Constitutional Concealed Carry I've gotten a lot of mail in favor of this. Hearings on it were heard today in the Federal and State Affairs Committee. Most of my mail says they want it to pass without amendments so I will be watching any amendments that are made in committee or on the floor closely and try to make the best decision possible. I know some of you are not in favor of it but I do believe the majority of the community supports it.

Weekly Coffee Meetings

My next coffee at Spencer Browne's Coffee House will be Saturday, March 14, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. It's great to visit with you and hear what is important to you.

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

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