

SHANNON FRANCIS

Kansas House District 125



Visitors



It was great visiting with advocates for Liberal Area Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence. Sadie Madden was named as Advocate of the Year for Kansas. What an honor. How blessed we are to have members of our community so willing to give their time to help those most in need.



SCCC/ATS was well represented on the state academic team by Ruben Pando and Megan Bryan. I enjoyed talking with them and Trustee Rick Brenneman about their future and our College.

Contact Shannon

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Useful Resources

[State of Kansas Website](#)

[The Kansas Legislature](#)

[Legislative Bill Reports](#)

[Listen Live to Proceedings](#)

[Find a State Agency](#)

[Kansas unclaimed Property](#)

[Current Road Conditions](#)

[National Do Not Call List](#)

[Kansas Charity Check](#)

Useful Phone Numbers

Medicaid Fraud

1-866-551-6328

Welfare Fraud Hotline

800-432-3913

Department On Aging

800-432-3535



Bob & Sharen Keating were at the capitol for Farm Bureau Day. We had a great visit talking about the issues facing Southwest Kansas. Did you know Bob made the first and last basket at Rindom Hall? I also had a nice visit with Sally Fuller representing our Tourism Bureau. She does a great job working to bring more visitors to Liberal.

The Budget

The House debated and voted on the budget bill this week, which included the Governor's allotments and rescissions. I did not vote for the bill. It does not solve the problems Kansas faces. Rather than confront the problems head on and cut unnecessary programs or increase revenues, the approach has been to sweep highway funds and borrow from the KPERS retirement plan. Rather than appropriate funds, which is the legislature's Constitutional responsibility, the bill gives that authority to the Governor if we fall below \$100 million in reserves. The current estimate for reserves at the end of this fiscal year is \$6 million.

Many of you ask, "Why don't we just cut spending?" The budget committees have made cuts, but in areas where most of you I've heard from don't want cuts. The "stealing" from KDOT is not really theft but instead is cutting spending on highways. Kansas has limited the increase in spending on schools to practically zero by adopting the block grant program. The budget committee has cut spending in public safety, which has resulted in the state having around 80 vacant highway patrol positions and a 30% turnover in corrections officers. The problems with our state mental hospitals have been widely publicized and include a loss of Medicaid funding, high

Child/Adult Abuse Hotline

800-922-5330

Child & Family Services

888-369-4777

Consumer Protection

800-423-2310

Crime Tip Hotline

800-252-8477

Crime Victim Assistance

800-828-9745

Gov- Brownback

800-748-4408

Highway Road Conditions

511 (in Kansas)

Housing Hotline

800-752-4422

KanCare Assistance

866-305-5147

Kansas Lottery

800-544-9467

Legislative Hotline

800-432-3924

Mental Health Services

888-582-3759

School Safety Hotline

877-626-8203

Social Security

800-772-1213

Taxpayer Assistance

785-368-8222

Tax Refund Status

800-894-0318

turnover, unsafe levels of overtime, bed shortages and dangerous working conditions. Our KPERS pension system has been underfunded for years. The state borrowed \$1 billion last year to help prop up KPERS, however this year, the budget bill would allow the Governor to delay the payment of our 4th quarter KPERS payment into the next budget year, to be repaid with interest in the following quarter. I ask you this: If we can't make our payments from now until the end of June where will we get the money to repay our KPERS contribution in July? I'm hearing from many of you that the state's elimination of the healthcare deduction from state income tax last year is causing severe problems for our elderly in senior care facilities and for those who are homebound and require home healthcare.

I think Yogi Berra said it best, "It's like Deja vu all over again." I will not kick the can down the road. This budget shortfall has been predicted since the 2012 tax plan was enacted. In 2012 Legislative Research forecasted an \$854 million shortfall in fiscal year 2016. If we consider the sales tax increase that many in the legislature pushed for last year, the elimination of several income tax deductions, the increased KDOT transfers in the budget and the allotments in this budget bill we are right at that \$854 million number. The definition of insanity is said to be doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. I think many times some folks in Topeka don't see the forest because of the trees. A great example is the floating of the KPERS payment into next fiscal year if we continue to have shortfalls. The problem should be to address our long term spending and revenue not just how to make it out of this budget year.

Convention of the States

There is a group in Topeka that is lobbying for passage of an Article V resolution. The resolution would allow for a convention of the states if 34 states approve it. The convention is based on Article V of the U.S. Constitution, which says that states can call a convention to propose amendments to our nation's Constitution. If convened, each state gets one vote and may appoint a delegation to represent them at the convention. The delegations would come up with changes to the U.S. Constitution and send those proposals back to the states to ratify. Five states – Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Alaska and Georgia – have

Unclaimed Property

800-432-0386

Unemployment Insurance

800-292-6333

Vital Statistics

785-296-1400

Voter Registration

800-262-8683

Worker's Comp

800-332-0353

passed Article V resolutions. I'd like your feedback. Should Kansas call for a convention of the states and seek to make changes to the U.S. Constitution? Is our Constitution best left the way our Founding Fathers wrote it with the subsequent amendments? I appreciate your thoughts as I study this issue.

Gannon Decision

The Supreme Court issued its decision regarding the School Block Grants the Governor and Legislature passed last year. As many thought would happen, the Court ruled the Block Grants to be unconstitutional. The Supreme Court said that the block grant does not provide for state funds to be divided equitably among the schools in the state. More to come on this as it develops.

Pancake Day



I want to thank Carol, my wife, for representing me at Pancake Day. Because of the budget debate I had to be in Topeka.

Legislative Coffee

I will be having my next Legislative Coffee Saturday, February 20th at 10 am at Spencer Browne's Coffee House. Please come by and let me know your thoughts.

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. My email address is:

Shannon.francis@house.ks.gov. This insures that I get the information correctly to the agency we are working with.

As I think of the dedication and hard work of my many colleagues across the state that understand the danger of our current path and working to correct it, I can't help but think of the lyrics in the song "Tomorrow"...

*When I'm stuck in a day that's gray, and lonely.
I just stick out my chin and grin and say.
The sun'll come out tomorrow so ya gotta hang on
til tomorrow, come what may.*

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Please contact me anytime. My email is: Shannon.francis@house.ks.gov.



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Paid for by Shannon Francis for State Representative, Lisa Hatcher Treasurer