

## **2015 Legislative Update No. 11 from Ron Highland, Representative of the 51<sup>st</sup> District**

Both the House and the Senate passed SB 7 – the block grant bill funding for K-12. The Governor signed the bill on Wednesday, March 25, 2015. It will become effective when published in the Kansas Register that normally comes out on Thursdays, that being next Thursday, April 2, 2015. However, the three judge panel has announced they may step in and stop the action from becoming law. If they do, the old formula and all the budgetary actions taken prior to the passage of SB 7 will stay in effect, to include the cuts made by the Governor for the 2014-2015 school year. We then would have to go back to the drawing board for the two year budget we developed and are negotiating with the Senate now.

This week was shortened so the Legislative staff would have time to make preparations for the next big week. Committee meetings essentially stopped and all are focused on finishing up bills with full debate on the House and Senate floor. In the House, we spent three days on the floor working thirty plus bills. That meant sitting for hours listening to debate and eating lunch while listening. Prior to going into the chamber for the debates, each party group (caucus) meets to discuss the bills to be heard. During these meetings (called calendar) the Representative who will be carrying each bill will give an overview of its contents, the committee's recommendations, and other pertinent information. Anyone is allowed to ask questions until all are comfortable and ready to go to the floor for debate and vote.

Several of the bills were clean up bills, but substantive bills were debated and passed. At this point we see bundling and contents removed and replaced. The more important bills passed were: SB 108 – Increasing real estate broker's and salesperson's license fees, and it was bundled with SB 106; SB 154 – Amending unemployment insurance benefits determination, employer classification and contribution rates, and it was bundled with HB 2357; HB 2391 – State employees, classified positions converted to unclassified positions; SB 95 – Creating the Kansas unborn child protection from dismemberment abortion act; three firearms bills, HB 2074, HB 2087 (both dealing with regulation of possession) and SB 45 – Authorizing the carrying of concealed handguns without a license under the personal and family protection act. HB 2095 – Allows \$1.5 billion of pension obligation bonds to finance a portion of the unfunded actuarial liability of KPERS; SB 240 – Changes State banking code and includes the addition of special orders by the State Banking Commissioner. The last bill was nicknamed the Uber bill, House substitute for SB 117 (contents deleted and replaced with HB 2286) – Regulation of transportation network company services.

A few of the bills were controversial and the debates lasted a couple of hours for each. Those included the abortion bill, concealed carry, and the Uber bill. The debates were passionate but emotions were held in check. Anger during debate is a losing proposition, no matter how right your argument may be. It made for long hours but the system is designed to take time to allow all points of view to be heard, making for a better end product. The Senate is going through the same process and as one would expect, they have different language in some of their bills dealing with the same subject. Either chamber may reject or agree with the other's language. If they agree then the bill is forwarded to the Governor. If they disagree, a conference committee is assigned to work out a compromise. All of next week will be dedicated to this process. The

final day for bill action will be April 3. This is called “drop dead” day. We will adjourn until April 29 for the veto session. During the veto session, bills vetoed by the Governor, Omnibus Appropriations Act, and Omnibus Reconciliations Spending Limit Bill are the items for action. During the adjournment time, the Appropriations and Tax Committees are busy working to reconcile the budget and funding the budgets to finish this year and the next two years.

You can read the bills in their entirety by going to the legislative web site, <http://www.kslegislature.org/li/>. If you need help navigating the site you can go to my web site, [www.ronhighland.com](http://www.ronhighland.com) where there is a syllabus that explains in detail how to get the information you need. My contact information is: 785-296-7310; Rm 561 W, State Capitol, Topeka, Kansas, 66612; and [ron.highland@house.ks.gov](mailto:ron.highland@house.ks.gov). It is an honor and a privilege to serve you.