

Legislative Update No. 2, February 5, 2018

The last week in January was a flurry of activity that peaked on Wednesday when many people came to witness the historic event of Governor Sam Brownback resigning and Governor Jeff Colyer's inauguration. The Capitol Rotunda was packed with attendees and outside the Capitol city rocked to a most impressive 19-cannon salute that I enjoyed witnessing. The next day Linda and I gave our personal congratulations and best wishes to Governor Jeff and Ruth Colyer, and his family during a reception at Cedar Crest.



The Legislature is now in full swing with all the committees having hearings on bills, working bills, and either passing out to the Whole House for consideration or killing the bills in committee. The House had final action on four bills this week. I voted yes on all, but HB 2042.

HB 2439 – Creating an additional crime of involuntary manslaughter for certain violations of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The Attorney General requested this bill to bring Kansas law in line with Federal law.

HB 2482 – Expanding the hours of sale of alcoholic liquor by the drink. The hours are currently 9 am to 2 am and this bill allows serving as early as 6 am. The argument was to even the field for those businesses along the Missouri border.

HB 2145 – Prohibiting the possession of a firearm by certain individuals. HB 2145 would amend the definition of “criminal use of weapons” by adding possession of a firearm by any of the following: ● Fugitives from justice; ● Aliens illegally or unlawfully in the United States; ● Persons convicted of a misdemeanor for a domestic violence offense within the past five years; and ● Persons subject to court orders restraining them from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner, child, or child of an

intimate partner. Law Enforcement agencies requested this bill to further protect the citizens of Kansas. It passed easily.

HB 2042 – Concealed carry licensure amendments under the personal and family protection act. The Attorney General requested the bill to align Kansas law with other states to enter into reciprocity agreements. The bill lowers the age to obtain a permit to conceal and carry to 18. The bill was amended to allow Regents Institution to disallow weapons on campus without a conceal carry permit. As expected, passions ran high and the debate lasted almost two hours.

The Committees I am assigned to were active as well.

**Fed & State:** Bills that passed out favorably:

HB 2470 – Alcoholic beverages, microbreweries; contract brewing;

HB 2476 – Including alcoholic candy and other confectionary products to the definition of alcoholic liquor;

HB 2438 – Prohibiting state agencies from using the same vender to plan and build certain IT projects;

HB 2441 – Audits of state agencies; financial-compliance audits; Kansas lottery security audit; selection of auditors, contract rules.

We also heard an interesting bill (HB 2948) presented by Native Americans to allow them to wear their traditional dress on special occasions, such as high school graduation, etc. Currently, some schools and organizations are not allowing this practice.

The **Agriculture Committee** heard presentations on Broadband needs in rural Kansas and another on the Kansas Poultry industry, or better stated, the lack thereof.

The **Transportation Committee** held hearings on three bills: HB 2486 – Allowing golf carts to be driven on certain streets at night; HB 2511 - Making commercial driver's licenses renewable every five years; and HB 2531 - Designating segments of Kansas and US highways to members of Kansas highway patrol officers killed in the line of duty.

Meetings with visitors this week included Mary Reed Spencer representing the National MS Society, Rick Hernandez from Community Health Ministry in Wamego, Alice Weingartner of Grace Med Health Inc., Renae Hively, Flint Hills Community Health Center; Krista Hahn of Wamego representing the Marion Dental Clinic and SCL Health; Clancy Holeman, Riley County Counselor; Dee McKee, Pottawatomie County Commissioner; and Marvin Rodriguez, Riley County Commissioner.

Benjamin Irvine, son of Bernard and Emily Irvine; and Annika Wiebers, daughter of Justin and Kristey Wiebers paged for me this week. It is always a joy to have our youth spend time at the Capitol and get a glimpse of their government at work.



My schedule was full on Saturday, beginning at 7:30 a.m. with a Legislative Town Hall event at the Manhattan Zoo, with the largest attendance since I have been in office. That evening the Lyon County Republicans hosted a Ronald Regan Dinner. It was a fun evening with good fellowship, recognition, speakers, and of course, food, some of which was Regan's favorites. The keynote speaker was Kansas Governor Jeff Colyer, who told of his experiences working with the Regan administration.

It is my honor to represent you and keep you informed with my newsletters. At my website, [www.ronhighland.com](http://www.ronhighland.com), you can find a syllabus that explains in detail how to get legislative information. My contact information is: Rm 561 W, State Capitol, Topeka, Kansas 66612; 785-296-7310; [ron.highland@house.ks.gov](mailto:ron.highland@house.ks.gov). I look forward to hearing from you.