

## Legislative Update No. 3 from Ron Highland, Representative of the 51<sup>st</sup> District

At last count, two hundred bills have been introduced in the House. All committees are working hard hearing testimonies for and against specific topics or bills. If the committee passes a bill, after their debate, it is then referred to the House as a committee report.

HB2023 was the first bill to come before the whole House. The bill, commonly referred to as the Paycheck Protection Act, passed by a vote of 68 to 56 and is now headed to the Senate for consideration. The bill would ban state or other units of government from making payroll deductions for employees for the purpose of contributing to their union's political action committee (PAC). Currently the state and local governments are bookkeepers for the political activities of public unions by collecting contributions to PACs. I voted yes on the bill.

During my campaign I stressed my belief in smaller government and less intrusion of the government into our lives. I also shared my philosophy of personal responsibility. It was for those reasons I voted yes. The bill does not restrict free speech or individuals from contributing to PACs. What it does do is give the person affected the personal responsibility to donate privately as much as they wish by check, cash, or automatic withdrawal from their personal banking account to the political action committee(s) of their choice.

I am hearing testimonies in the joint House and Senate Education Committees where bills are expected to be introduced beginning next week. The Education Budget Committee will begin evaluating specific budgets for post-secondary schools next week. The Energy and Environment Committee heard testimonies this week packed with detail concerning the drilling, transporting, and marketing of energy in our state. The debate over "global warming" was especially interesting and informative. Committees are discussing other bills, including a "gun owner's rights bill," one changing the process by which judges are appointed which passed in the Senate, and one strengthening the state's human trafficking statutes.

The web site, [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org), is available to all. There you are able to view the calendar for each day, the bills under consideration, committee activities and much more. It is an excellent place to learn about the process and to watch it taking place on a daily basis.

If you have concerns, issues or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at [Ron.Highland@house.ks.gov](mailto:Ron.Highland@house.ks.gov) or 785-296-7310.