

Legislative Update No. 4 from Ron Highland, Representative of the 51st District

Another week and what seems to be an unending introduction of bills comes to an end. The deadline for introducing legislation ends this coming week with a couple of exceptions. The Governor released his budget and tax proposals to the legislature this week. The Tax Committee has begun its work in earnest. I will not have any tax bill information to report until the committee has done their work. At last count, the Federal and State Affairs Committee has received thirteen Second Amendment bills to evaluate. The interest is understandably high in both of these areas.

We celebrated Native American Legislature Day this week. Several tribes were represented and honored for their military service. The ceremony was impressive, but even more impressive are the veterans themselves. We were invaded on the “Birds in the Capitol Day.” Actually the official name is “Hawks,” and KU Ambassadors came in to keep everyone aware of their fine university. I’ve heard that the “Cats in the Capitol Day” is just as impressive and the ice cream is a big hit. KSU day at the Capitol will be on Wednesday.

The Education Budget Committee approval process is in full swing. We heard and approved budgets presented by more agencies and higher education schools this week.

The Education Committee is continuing to hear testimony from various groups and schools. Each is presenting ideas for innovative methods of teaching to enhance children’s learning. School districts in Kansas have the responsibility and local control to determine how their children will be educated. Perhaps the most interesting presentations I heard were schools and programs utilizing virtual schooling. They are using technology to teach students at home or actually wherever the student may be. In a few cases that includes children in foreign countries, such as children in military families. One school in particular, Lawrence Virtual School, is a stand-alone charter school. They serve 1160 Kansas grade school students throughout the world and the high school has an enrollment of 240. I did not know that the Kansas Department of Education has advanced to this level for educational choice.

I thank you for the honor of serving you. Please feel free to contact me at Ron.Highland@house.ks.gov or 785-296-7310.