

## **Legislative Update No. 6 from Ron Highland, Representative of the 51<sup>st</sup> District**

The legislative week was shortened by two days due to the snow storm. I spent my Thursday, just like many of you, scooping snow to be able to leave home. The Education Committee did call for a meeting on Friday, but it too was cancelled due to members being unable to get to Topeka by early Friday morning.

The Education Committee held hearings on three bills: 1) HB 2349, Legislative Post Audit of School Districts; 2) HB 2320, Creation of the Kansas Public Charter School Act; and 3) HB 2263, Enacting the School District Special Needs Scholarship Program. House bills 2263 and 2320 were met with opponents and proponents, while HB 2349 was not so challenged.

The Education Budget Committee held hearings on the budgets for Board of Regents schools KSU, KU, FHSU, ESU, PSU, WSU, Tech Colleges, and KACCT (Kansas Association of Community College Trustees). I was impressed with the presentations by most of the university and college presidents and chancellor during the week. The innovative programs they are running or planning to start were impressive. One example is the university in China run by Fort Hays State University, presently serving 3,200 students. It is the first of its kind and it is a financial winner for them. Johnson County Community College has the highest post-secondary enrollment in the state.

The Energy and Environment Committee spent time on hearings concerning HB 2305. The bill is a Kansas Storage Tank Act. From testimony we learned that Kansas has one of the best programs in the nation, but that current EPA regulations and proposed new regulations may cause concern in the future.

The House of Representatives did pass some repealer bills. These simply repealed current laws that are out dated and no longer applicable.

I had a private meeting during the week with eleven Riley and Wabaunsee County 4-H youth. It was a pure delight to spend time with these young people and answer all of their questions. I also met with representatives of the Golden Living Center at Eskridge, and the National Association of Social Workers. Linda and I were guests at the annual Kansas Livestock Association dinner and visited with a few of my constituents in southern Wabaunsee and northern Lyon Counties. I attended the funeral of Mr. Wayne Owen, a long time Sergeant of Arms who died suddenly last week. We get to know these gentlemen well and they become a big part of the legislative family as they keep us safe and the daily routine orderly.

The web site, <http://www.kslegislature.org>, contains all the information on what bills are being worked by committee and each bill can be read there. This is your government. Let me know if you have an opinion on any of the bills.

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