



Legislative UPDATE

News & Information for the People of the 29th District

January 31, 2020

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THIS WEEK AT THE CAPITOL

It's been a busy week. Senate spent more than four hours debating the constitutional amendment on abortion. It ultimately passed on a vote of 28-12.

In a bit of good news, on Wednesday we celebrated Kansas Day, and we honored on the Senate floor the finalists for the Teacher of the Year award. On Thursday, the Senate recognized Dolores Huerta, a social justice activist who fought for farm workers and women everywhere.

Next week, we anticipate more work in committees, especially on the Medicaid expansion bill in Public Health and Welfare. It is also likely the House will debate their constitutional amendment on abortion.

If you want to watch the proceedings of the House or the Senate, [a live video feed is available here](#). A live audio feed is also still available through www.kslegislature.org. You can also listen in to [committee meetings here](#).

I welcome your input on any of these issues. Please feel free to visit or contact me at 316-210-4380 or oletha29th@aol.com, if you should have any questions or concerns. Or stop by my legislative office, located in room 135-E of the Topeka Statehouse.

ABORTION AMENDMENT PASSES

On a vote of 28-12, the constitutional amendment seeking to eliminate abortion rights in Kansas passed the Senate on Wednesday after more than four hours of debate. I voted no.

Here's what you should know about it:

- The case arose from a challenge to Senate Bill 95, enacted in 2015 to ban and criminalize the most common and safe method of second-trimester abortion,

dilation and evacuation (commonly referred to as D&E). Only 1.3% of abortions are done at 21 weeks or beyond. Yet, a ban on D&E limits options to other procedures with known increased risks to women.

- The Kansas Supreme Court's ruling established that, under the Kansas Constitution's Bill of Rights, women have a fundamental right to personal autonomy and that includes decisions related to pregnancy.
- The Court recognized this right as a fundamental right, which means it can be regulated by the State. However, the State must provide a compelling State interest and the regulations are narrowly tailored to promote that interest.
- The Kansas Supreme Court's ruling did not strike down any law. It upheld the temporary injunction initially imposed by the lower courts on Senate Bill 95. It handed the case back to the lower courts for further scrutiny. The State must now provide evidence that the State has a compelling interest.
- The Kansas Supreme Court did conclude that the providers who challenged the law could show that they were substantially likely to win on the merits, which is why they upheld the temporary injunction.
- The Constitutional Amendment is not necessary for the Legislature to continue passing reasonable regulations related to abortion. If the laws passed are challenged, the courts must review legislation encroaching on a fundamental right with strict scrutiny analysis. Other states with strict scrutiny standards have abortion regulations still in place.
- As it passed, the Constitutional Amendment will appear on the August 4 primary ballot. Historically, primary elections have one-third of the turnout as General Elections. An attempt to amend the Constitutional Amendment to move it to the General Election failed on a vote of 13-27. I voted for this amendment.
- Two attempts were made, once by Senate Democrat Vic Miller and once by Senate Democratic Leader Anthony Hensley, to amend the Constitutional Amendment to add language ensuring rights for women who became pregnant in cases of rape or incest, or for those whose lives were at risk. Both attempts failed. I voted for both amendments.
- Multiple attempts were made to clarify the explanatory statements that will appear on the ballot to more accurately reflect what the Constitutional Amendment does so that voters would have a better understanding when deciding how to vote. All of these attempts failed. I voted in favor of all of them.
- The one amendment that did get added establishes the August 4 election a "special election" to align with Section 14 of the Kansas Constitution. It passed on a voice vote. I did not vote for it.

- The amendment now goes to the House for consideration. The House will likely take up their version next week.

CAPITOL TOURS

The Capitol building is truly the house of the Kansas people. Especially now that renovations are complete, I would encourage everyone to visit. It's truly a spectacular building rich with Kansas history.

The Statehouse has a tour guide service for visitors to the Capitol. Visitors must enter the capitol building on the north side or through the underground parking garage; the entrance to the garage is also on the north side, off 8th street near the corner of 8th and Harrison. It is free to park for two hours. The Visitors Information Desk is on the Garden Level of the Capitol. To schedule a group tour, call 785-296-3966.

OTHER BILLS TO WATCH

- **SHELDON'S LAW [SB 218](#)** was originally introduced as SB 37 by Senator Tom Holland of Baldwin City. It requires clergy to report certain abuse and neglect of children. The Senate passed it in 2019 on a vote of 39-0. It's now in the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs awaiting a hearing.
- **NATURAL DISASTER TAX ABATEMENTS [SB 242](#)**, introduced by Senator Tom Holland of Baldwin City in response to the EF-4 tornado that devastated certain parts of Douglas and Leavenworth counties in late May 2019, establishes tax abatements for agricultural buildings destroyed by natural disasters. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Taxation and Assessment.
- **GOLDEN YEARS PROPERTY TAX FREEZE** Introduced by Senator Tom Holland of Baldwin City, SB 104 establishes a property tax freeze for over 76,000 qualifying senior and disabled veteran households. The homestead would have to be appraised at \$350,000 or less and homeowners would have to have a household income of \$50,000 or less. The bill passed the Senate in 2019 on a vote of 39-0. It is now in the House Committee on Taxation, which had a hearing on it on April 3, 2019. It's awaiting further action.

HEARINGS HELD ON SB250 AND SB275

Senator Faust-Goudeau gave testimony this week on Senate Bill 250, which she introduced. This bill is an act against discrimination; relating to race, hair texture and protective hairstyles. With the National and local media attention regarding those terminated from their jobs or excluded from participating in school sport activities compelled her to introduce this bill.

She also gave testimony on SB 275. This bill is about eligibility requirements for restricted driving privileges and elimination of additional 90-day wait period of

suspended or revoked licenses. These bills will be assigned to an appropriate committee for study and recommendation. The committee then makes a recommendation to the whole house to “pass” or “not to pass” the bill. The committee can also propose amendments to a bill, so it may recommend that a bill be passed as amended.

VISITORS AT THE CAPITOL

ROTC cadets, Calie Dilks, Nadeen Abu-Sheybi and Alexandra LaPorge visited the Capitol and met with Senator Faust-Goudeau on January 15.



IMPORTANT STATE PHONE NUMBERS

Here is a list of numbers I often receive requests for during the Legislative Session. I hope you will find this information helpful.

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| Attorney General
(888) 428-8436 | (785) 296-3963 | (866) 305-5147 |
| Child Abuse Hotline
(800) 922-5330 | Fraud Hotline
(800) 432-3919 | Kansas Jobs
(785) 235-5627 |
| Consumer Protection
(800) 432-2310 | KPERS
(888) 275-5737 | Kansas Lottery
(785) 296-5700 |
| Crime Tip Hotline
(800) 572-7463 | Governor’s Office
(877) 579-6757 | Kansas State Library
(800) 432-3924 |
| Crime Victim Referral
(800) 828-9745 | Highway Conditions
(800) 585-7623 | Legislative Hotline
(800) 432-3924 |
| Department on Aging
(800) 432-3535 | Housing Hotline
(800) 752-4422 | School Safety Hotline
(877) 626-8203 |
| Driver’s License Bureau | KanCare Consumer Assistance | Social Security
(800) 772-1213 |
| | | DCF |

(785) 296-1491

Suicide Prevention
Hotline

(800) 273-8255

Tax Refund Status Info

(800) 894-0318

Taxpayer Assistance

(785) 368-8222

Unclaimed Property

(800) 432-0386

Vital Statistics

(Birth Certificates)

(785) 296-1400

Victims of Human
Trafficking

(888) 373-7888