



Legislative UPDATE

News & Information For the people of the 29th District

February 7, 2020

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Chiefs victory closes legislature
- Black history month
- Abortion amendment update
- 50/50 parenting time
- What to do about Docking?
- Interesting legislative statistics
- Other bills to watch
- Important State Phone Numbers



CHIEFS VICTORY CLOSES LEGISLATURE

The Legislature closed Wednesday to celebrate the Kansas Chiefs Super Bowl LIV victory – the first time in 50 years. A parade was held in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, and Legislative leaders wanted legislators and staffers to have an opportunity to attend.

The Senate took action on two bills on Tuesday. One from the consent calendar relating to the legislative division of post audit. It passed 39-1. The second, from General Orders, was a bill related to temporary parenting plans. It also passed 39-1.

Next week is the last week for bill introductions in non-exempt committees. These are any committees other than Senate Federal & State Affairs, Senate Assessment and Taxation, and Senate Ways & Means.

I am honored to serve as your Senator. My office is located in 135-E. Please feel free to visit or to contact me at 316-210-4380 or oletha29th@aol.com, if you should have any questions or concerns.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month, a time devoted to celebrating and recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history.

- **Selma Burke** was an American sculptor and a member of the Harlem Renaissance Movement. She is best known for her portrait of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which inspired the profile on the dime. She described herself as "a people's sculptor" and created many pieces of public art, often portraits of prominent African American figures. In 1979, she received the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award.



- **Fannie Lou Hamer** was an American voting and women's rights activist, community organizer, and a leader in the civil rights movement. She was the co-founder and vice-chair of the Freedom Democratic Party. Hamer helped to organize Mississippi's Freedom Summer along with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). She was also a co-founder of the National Women's Political Caucus. She was known for her use of spiritual hymnals and quotes in leading the civil rights movement for black women in Mississippi. She was extorted, threatened, harassed, shot at, and assaulted by white supremacists and police while trying to register for and exercise her right to vote.



- **Joanne Bland** is the co-founder and former director of the National Voting Rights Museum located in Selma, Alabama. By the age of 11, she had been arrested 13 documented times. She was an active participant in marches that became known as "Bloody Sunday" and "Turnaround Tuesday." She was one of seven black students who integrated A.G. Parish High School in Alabama. Today, at the age of 67, she remains active in organizations such as the Christian Leadership Conference, NAACP, The Sunflower Project, and Ladies with a Mission.



Kansas Black Legislative Day at the Capitol

Kansas Black Legislative Day is an annual advocacy day held during the month of February at the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka. The goal of the day is to encourage civic participation in the Kansas African American Community. There are opportunities to meet legislators, learn about the legislative process, and current issues. Individuals who attend will receive information that can be taken to their communities and shared; thereby **empowering, educating and engaging** even more people across the state on current issues and how to impact positive change.

The events will include advocacy training, information on current bills in the legislature identified as of particular importance to the African American community. The days' attendees will have the opportunity to meet members of the Kansas Black Legislative Caucus, view the Kansas House and Senate in action, and time to visit the legislators' offices to advocate for issues they're concerned about.

Kansas Black Legislative Day at the Capitol is sponsored by the Kansas African American Legislative Caucus, Kansas African American Affairs Commission, Kansas Black Leadership Council and Kansas State AFL-CIO.

Members of several organizations are in attendance:

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority

Kansas State Conference of NAACP

Branches

ABORTION AMENDMENT UPDATE: CURRENTLY FAILING IN THE HOUSE

At the publication of this newsletter on February 7, 2020, at approximately 1:45 p.m., the House was entering its third hour of being in a "Call of the House." This means no Representative is allowed to leave until all votes have been cast. This is a strategy often used when House Leadership is trying to get the votes needed to pass a piece of legislation. In this case, they're trying to pass SCR 1613, the Constitutional Amendment limiting abortion rights for Kansas women that passed the Senate last week. Currently, they are 5 votes short of passing the amendment. They need 84 votes, or a two-thirds majority. If the vote continues to fall short of the necessary votes, it will fail. However, I wouldn't consider it dead. They have their own version of the amendment, HCR 5019.

50/50 PARENTING TIME

On a vote of 39-1, the Senate passed [SB 157](#), which is a bill I co-sponsored. It establishes a presumption when making an order for a temporary parenting plans that it is in the best interests of the child for fit, willing, and able parents to have temporary joint legal custody and share equally in parenting time. It also adds that evidence provided that domestic abuse has occurred or is occurring would determine it's not in the best interest of the child to have equal parenting time.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE DOCKING BUILDING?

The Department of Administration presented the legislature with a few options as to what to do about the Docking State Office Building, located across the street just west of the Capitol, as directed by a proviso included in the FY 2020 budget. For years, during the previous administration, the building fell into disrepair and nearly all of the agencies have been moved out of the building and into private rental spaces throughout Topeka. There are many concerns about the money going towards paying rent rather than invested in repairs of the buildings. There are also concerns about the agencies spread out in multiple sites; this makes it difficult for Kansans to receive services effectively.

The Docking Building has 532,000 square feet of space, including an underground central utility plant serving the multiple-building Capitol complex. Much of the building is fundamentally sound, providing the opportunity to modify and rehabilitate it into a modern, energy-efficient building that would provide much needed office space in close proximity to the Capitol building.

Four viable options for the use of Docking – while also addressing the needs for a new laboratory for KDHE – have presented to both the Senate Ways & Means Committee and the Joint Committee on State Building Construction. Below are the four well-researched options done by the Clark-Huesemann Architectural firm. (Note: Amounts are construction costs.)

- Option A: Utilize entire Docking building and renovate—\$84,616,404
- Option A + KDHE Labs: Utilize Docking and include new KDHE lab on floors 2 & 3—\$114,981,261
- Option B: Utilize first three existing Docking floors, add 3 floors, and remove top floors—\$74,287,114
- Option B + KDHE Labs: Utilize first three floors, add 3 floors, include New KDHE lab top-- \$103,728,082

In addition to the possibility of placing the needed KDHE lab in Docking, three options were given to build a new laboratory next to the current antiquated and inadequate laboratory currently located in a 1950's re-purposed hospital at Forbes Field. All three options put construction costs in the neighborhood of \$41,000,000. It should also be noted that a new lab would save \$50,000 per year alone in energy costs.

I support the serious consideration of rehabilitating Docking. It would bring state agencies and their staff back to one centralized location, in a building owned and operated by the State. It would prepare the state for future space needs and would provide modern, energy-efficient office space for state agencies for workforce efficiency, recruitment, and retention. I hope that the Legislature will consider one of these recommendations this session.

INTERESTING LEGISLATIVE STATISTICS

During the 2019 legislative session, 241 bills were introduced in the Kansas Senate, but only 30 bills (12%) were passed; 419 bills were introduced in the Kansas House, but only 39 (9%) were passed. The Legislature runs on a two-year cycle. 2019 was the first session of the two-year cycle; if a bill was not passed or was not killed, it remains viable for the 2020 Session. Additionally, more bills may be introduced. So far, an additional 102 bills have been introduced in the Senate and 109 in the House. So, when you ask your legislator about a bill and s/he is not familiar with it or can't tell you the bill number, have mercy!

OTHER BILLS TO WATCH

- **LOCAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE** [SB 299](#), introduced by Senator Tom Hawk (D-Manhattan), seeks to enhance transparency in certain local campaigns by requiring community college board candidates and school board candidates in districts with more than 5,000 students to file their receipts and expenditures reports to the Governmental Ethics Commission prior to their respective elections. With this bill, the above-mentioned candidates would be placed under the same campaign finance rules as city commissioners in first-class cities. The bill had a hearing in the Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections, and Local Government on Thursday, February 6.
- **FINES FOR UNLICENSED CHILDCARE PROVIDERS** A bipartisan bill, [SB 312](#), introduced by Senator Pat Pettey (D-Kansas City) co-sponsored by 20 other Senators would impose a \$1,000 fine for operating a childcare facility without a license. After proper notice has been given to the unlicensed facility, each day they remain without a license will be considered a separate violation and result in an additional \$1,000 fine. The bill had a hearing Tuesday in the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare.
- **SPORTS WAGERING** [SB 283](#) allows the Kansas Lottery to enter into a contract with lottery gaming facility managers for managing sports wagering in-person at their facility or over the internet through websites and mobile device applications approved by the Kansas Lottery. It would prohibit other businesses from participating in the sports betting industry. A hearing on the bill was held in the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs last week.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The strongest people are not those who show strength in front of us, but those who win battles we know nothing about.....

The first to apologize is the bravest. The first to forgive is the strongest. And the first to forget is the happiest.

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.

Attorney General (888) 428-8436	Governor's Office (877) 579-6757	(800) 772-1213
Child Abuse Hotline (800) 922-5330	Highway Conditions (800) 585-7623	DCF (785) 296-1491
Consumer Protection (800) 432-2310	Housing Hotline (800) 752-4422	Suicide Prevention Hotline (800) 273-8255
Crime Tip Hotline (800) 572-7463	KanCare Consumer Assistance (866) 305-5147	Tax Refund Status Info (800) 894-0318
Crime Victim Referral (800) 828-9745	Kansas Jobs (785) 235-5627	Taxpayer Assistance (785) 368-8222
Department on Aging (800) 432-3535	Kansas Lottery (785) 296-5700	Unclaimed Property (800) 432-0386
Driver's License Bureau (785) 296-3963	Kansas State Library (800) 432-3924	Vital Statistics (Birth Certificates) (785) 296-1400
Fraud Hotline (800) 432-3919	Legislative Hotline (800) 432-3924	Victims of Human Trafficking (888) 373-7888
KPERS (888) 275-5737	School Safety Hotline (877) 626-8203	
	Social Security	