



Legislative UPDATE

News & Information for the People of the 29th District

February 14, 2020

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ONE MONTH INTO SESSION

We are officially one month into session. While committees continued to hold hearings and consider legislation, the Senate as a whole took no action this week.

This week marked the last week for bill introductions. With a few exceptions, as of Friday at 5 p.m., no more bills can be introduced for the 2020 session. The deadline for bills to pass out of their house of origin, also known as turnaround day, is February 27.

It is truly an honor to serve you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 316-210-4380 or by email at oletha29th@aol.com. Or, stop by my legislative office located in room 135-E of the Statehouse.

ABORTION AMENDMENT FAILS

On a vote of 80-43, [SCR 1613](#) failed to pass the House last Friday. It required 84 votes to move on to the primary election ballot in August.

In response to the failed vote, Senate President Susan Wagle sent more than a dozen bills back to committee and has declared no work will be done in the Senate related to Medicaid expansion until the Constitutional Amendment passes. Even in committees, bills pertaining to healthcare and addressing Kansans critical needs are not being scheduled for hearings. She is obstructing the legislative process and wasting taxpayer dollars for the sake of her own political ambitions.

MEDICAID EXPANSION UPDATE

Debate had been anticipated this week on Senate Bill 252 – the bill containing the Medicaid expansion compromise – but the chair of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare delayed the bill from getting out of committee. It is now unknown when or if there will be debate on it.

The committee scheduled to debate the bill Monday was adjourned abruptly and the chairperson gave excuses that the bill needed to be more thoroughly vetted.

On Tuesday, an impromptu hearing was held without any public notice; members of the committee were even unaware of the hearing until it was happening. Only pro-life groups provided testimony explaining how Medicaid expansion would provide funding for abortions. However, this is absolutely not true. State and federal laws prohibit the use of public funds for abortion. No opportunities were given to anyone with opposing or differing viewpoints.

For now, the bill is stuck in committee. Senate rules allow for a bill to be pulled out of committee on a vote in the Senate with approval by 24 Senators. If you recall, this was attempted last year and was short just one vote. Once pulled out of committee, Senate Majority leader (and co-sponsor of SB 252) would have the authority to place it on General Orders for consideration by the entire Senate.

OTHER BILLS TO WATCH

- **SUSPENDED LICENSES** Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau (D-Wichita) introduced [SB 275](#), which would remove the requirement that an individual who is found to be driving on a suspended or revoked license would receive an additional suspension or revocation period of 90 days. The bill had a hearing this week in the Senate Committee on Transportation.
- **INSULIN PRICES** In response to rising costs for insulin users, Senator Tom Holland (D-Baldwin City) introduced a bill that institutes a \$100 maximum out-of-pocket cost-share per month per covered person for prescription insulin drugs. [SB 376](#) would go into effect January 1, 2021 and would apply to large group or individual health insurance policies; health benefit plans; medical service plans contracts; hospital service corporation contracts; hospital and medical service corporation contracts; fraternal benefit societies; and health maintenance organizations. It would also apply to state employee healthcare benefits plans. It has been referred to Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance. An identical bill in the House ([HB 2557](#)) had a hearing this week.
- **SURPRISE MEDICAL BILLS** Senator Barbara Bollier (D-Mission Hills) introduced a bill seeking to end surprise medical bills. [SB 357](#) is a consumer protection bill that eliminates surprise charges when an insurance company doesn't cover certain charges for services. The proposed legislation would require the insurer and the biller to negotiate terms without sending bills to the

patient. 28 states have already enacted similar laws. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance.

- **UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS** Bills in both the House and Senate have been introduced that expand unemployment benefits from 16 weeks to 26 weeks. The bills are [SB 394](#) and [HB 2642](#). They have been introduced in response to the recent layoffs in Wichita. The Senate bill is currently in the Senate Commerce Committee.
- **PAPER BALLOTS** [SB 310](#) requires that all voting systems in the state use paper ballots. The paper ballots must be marked by the voter or a machine can be used to complete the ballot, but it must be a non-tabulating machine or printing device. The ballots must be made available for inspection and correction by the voter. Canvassing must be done by hand or with a scanning system or other tabulating equipment. Recounts, however, must be done by hand. Additionally, poll books require handwritten signatures.
- **YEAR-ROUND FIREWORKS** A bill in the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs that would allow retail sales of fireworks all year and would extend the period of sales for seasonal retailers from June 20 through July 5. However, [SB 362](#) also gives cities and counties the authority to prohibit the sale of fireworks by retailers or seasonal retailers or they can establish a fireworks season different from statute. Finally, it seeks to repeal the prohibition on bottle rockets. A hearing was held Thursday in Senate Federal and State Affairs.
- **SPOUSAL EXEMPTION FOR SEXUAL BATTERY** On a vote of 105-15, a bill passed the House last week removing the spousal exemption for sexual battery. [HB 2467](#) also requires a person convicted of a first offense to undergo a domestic violence offender assessment conducted by a certified batterer intervention program and follow all recommendations made by such program. The bill now comes to the Senate.
- **BANNING TRANSGENDER ATHLETES** A bill introduced by a group of six Republican Representatives requires student athletes to participate in school athletics based upon their biological gender at birth. The restrictions would apply to all activities through the Kansas State High School Activities Association, which currently has a policy in place that gives local school districts authority to make such decisions and allows for transgender students to participate in the gender category they identify with. [HB 2589](#) is an unnecessary law and I can only hope it never makes it out of committee.

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.

- **Lucile H. Bluford** was a reporter and eventually the managing editor of *The Kansas City Call* newspaper. She garnered public support for the election of Alan Wheat, Kansas City's first African-American congressman; social action during the Civil Rights Movement; speaking out on local economic, civic



and development issues concerning KC's African American community and seeking improvements and increased access to high quality education. The Lucile H. Bluford Branch of the Kansas City Public Library stands in her honor.

- **Mary-Winston Jackson** is a famous mathematician and scientist who worked in the aerospace industry during the Space Age. She worked at the predecessor of NASA, called NACA, for two years as a research mathematician, commonly referred to as a "human computer." Over the three decades she worked in the industry, she combatted racial discrimination and worked to ensure women and minorities were given fair consideration for promotion and recognized for their accomplishments.



- **Lutie Lytle**, a Kansan and Topeka High School graduate, was the first African American woman admitted to the Kansas State bar. When she was hired as a faculty member at Central Tennessee University, some news reports referred to her as the only black female law instructor in the world. In 1935, Lytle returned to Topeka to address a large audience at St. John's A.M.E. Church and advocate for racially integrated schools.



BLACK LEGISLATIVE DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Governor Laura Kelly signed a Proclamation declaring February as Black History Month and February 13 as Kansas Black Legislative Day. There were many events scheduled at the Capitol on that day and topics of conversation about Civic Participation, Education, Health & Environmental issues, Criminal Justice Reform and Public Safety, the Crown Act and Economic Development. There were groups here from the Kansas African American Affairs Commission, the African American Council of Elders, Kansas African American Legislative Caucus, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Heartland Black Business Chamber, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and the Kansas State Conference of NAACP Branches.

There are eight Kansas African American Legislatures serving in the Senate or the House of Representatives. Senate members are Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau and Senator David Haley. Representatives are Barbara Ballard, K.C. Ohaebosim, Valdenia Winn, Gail Finney, Broderick Henderson and Willie Dove.



Pictured left to right, Elaine Gillery of the Community Voice, Mrs. Vandross, Lt Col. James Vandross, US Air Force, Senator Oletha Faust-Godeau and Representative Broderick Henderson.

The Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns (KCDC)

KCDC provides policy recommendations to the State of Kansas on changes to laws regulations and programs that affect people with disabilities. The Commission provides information and referral to the public on legislative activities, emergency preparedness for communities and people with disabilities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and rights. KCDC is an informational and referral resource for people who are not sure where to go for their problem or issue. For more information visit KCDC.info.ks.gov.

WEALTH DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Climate disruption impacts the lives, health, and economic well-being of Kansans. Climate change is a major public health concern in Kansas. Those least responsible will be most impacted and least able to adapt. Solutions exist at all levels to build resilience, economic opportunities and healthy communities.



Pictured: Senator Faust-Goudeau, Jane Byrnes, Lori Lawrence, Alisha Gridley and Mark Shobe of the Citizens' Climate Lobby which is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that can empower you to become an advocate for a livable world.

SEXUAL & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence was at the Capitol on February 12. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive and coercive behavior used to gain dominance, power, and control over an intimate partner. It includes the use of illegal and legal behaviors and tactics that undermine the victim's sense of self, free will and safety. It takes many forms including emotional, verbal, sexual and physical abuse as well as isolation, stalking and financial abuse. Abuse happens to people of every age, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and ability.

- Over 18,000 victims of domestic violence received fact-to-face services from Kansas advocacy programs.
- One incident of domestic violence was reported to Kansas law enforcement every 21 minutes, 50 seconds.
- Over 1 in 4 homicides in Kansas are a result of domestic violence.
- Over 5,500 Protection from Stalking Orders and over 8000 Protection from Abuse Orders are filed in Kansas each year.



Refer victims to 888-END-ABUSE (888-363-2287)

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

Child Abuse Hotline
(800) 922-5330

Consumer Protection
(800) 432-2310

Crime Tip Hotline
(800) 572-7463

Crime Victim Referral
(800) 828-9745

Department on Aging
(800) 432-3535

Driver's License Bureau
(785) 296-3963

Fraud Hotline
(800) 432-3919

KPERS
(888) 275-5737

Governor's Office
(877) 579-6757

Highway Conditions
(800) 585-7623

Housing Hotline
(800) 752-4422

KanCare Consumer
Assistance
(866) 305-5147

Kansas Jobs
(785) 235-5627

Kansas Lottery
(785) 296-5700

Kansas State Library
(800) 432-3924

Legislative Hotline
(800) 432-3924

School Safety Hotline
(877) 626-8203
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