

# Rep. Sydney Carlin's News from The State House District 66, January 16, 2008

## **LEGISLATURE STARTS 2008 SESSION**

Yesterday the Legislature kicked off the 2008 session in a newly redecorated and reconfigured House of Representatives. I hope you will be able to come over this year and see the beautiful new chamber. I have been moved back a few rows and my seat number is 94. I sit on the right side as you look at the podium. Our House Chamber looks bright and new. If you wish to contact me at the capital you may call: 785-296-7651 or 800-432-3924. If you come to the capital please stop by my office a 521 South and we can have a visit.

## **STATE OF THE STATE**

Last night, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius called on Kansas lawmakers to confront climate change, increase education funding and make health care more available. "Let us once again aim for the stars," Sebelius said in the State of the State speech to kick off the start of the legislative session. Sebelius also reaffirmed her endorsement of a 50-cent-per-pack increase in the cigarette tax and a statewide ban on public smoking in indoor places. Because of the state's natural resources, Sebelius said Kansas was poised to play a historic role in the nation's development of wind energy and alternative fuels. Energy is likely to be discussed in depth this session, a hot topic since the Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment Secretary rejected two coal-burning power plants because of concerns about carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. The political push back from supporters of the \$3.5 billion plants has been fierce and threatens to be a bone of contention during the 2008 session. But during her address, Sebelius challenged the Legislature to work with her to put together "a comprehensive climate change action plan." And she called for a reduction in greenhouse gases.

Pointing out her guests — 1-year-old twins Kimberlin and Samuel Lovell of Mulvane, who were born the day Sebelius was inaugurated for her second term as Governor, and their parents and grandparents — Sebelius called on lawmakers to do the heavy political lifting now for future generations. "Let us tonight resolve to create a Kansas in which futures are bright, hopes are realized and our communities are safe and secure," she said.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, a Democrat in her second term, unveiled her goals for the 2008 legislative session during her State of the State address to a joint session of the Legislature. Here are some of items on her agenda this year:

- **Education**

Sebelius said improvements were needed in the state education system to prepare Kansans for the "innovation economy." She endorsed a \$167.6 million increase for public schools next year, to finish the court ordered funding to which the Legislature has previously committed. And she also proposed adding funds to implement full-day kindergarten and improve early childhood education. House Speaker Melvin Neufeld said he agreed with Sebelius on the need to improve prenatal and early

childhood health care.

- To fund the third year of the three-year school finance plan, which will cost \$167.6 million (previously estimated at \$122M)
- Add another year to the three-year plan, which would include \$27 million to full-day kindergarten.
- \$23 Million in block grants for early childhood education;
- Funding to start up the Kansas Academy of Math and Science for qualified High School Juniors and Seniors located at Fort Hays State University.

### **Higher Education**

Sebelius said her proposed budget, which will be unveiled this week, includes a \$3 million increase in Financial Aid scholarships for higher education students. "This may be more crucial than we think. We may be going into recession, and parents are having a hard time paying for their children" to go to college, she said. Sebelius said her budget also calls for increased training of pharmacists at Kansas University. She also vowed to continue the approximately \$5 million annual appropriation to the Kansas Cancer Center at KU for efforts to attain national cancer treatment center designation.

- \$35 Million block grant for the Regent's institutions  
Which includes a 2.5% pay increase to all state employees
- 3% COLA over 3 years for KPERS retirees
- \$2.5 Million to fund New Technology at Technical Colleges
- \$3 Million increase in state scholarship funds, which would help an additional 2,000 college students.
- \$1 Million for new teaching scholarships in math, science and technology.
- \$15 Million increase for Deferred Maintenance at Universities

### **Health Care**

- Adopt a 50-cent per pack increase in the cigarette tax and statewide ban on indoor, public smoking.
- Continue state investment of \$5 million annually in attaining the National Cancer designation for Kansas University by 2010.
- Expand KU School of Pharmacy to eventually double its current size.

### **Economy**

- \$40 Million to Debt Reduction
- Create the Kansas Innovation Consortium through executive order, which would work on the economy.
- \$2.1 million to support three Offices of Rural Opportunities to attract business development.

### **Energy**

- Make all state buildings meet energy conservation standards.
- Increase the number of interest-free loans to homeowners to improve home energy efficiency.
- Develop a comprehensive climate change plan.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- Increase renewable sources of energy.
- Make Kansas a leader in producing alternative fuels; create a Bio-Energy Research Grant Program to look for new fuel technologies.

**GOVERNOR SEBELIUS TO GIVE DEMOCRATIC RESPONSE TO  
PRES. BUSH'S STATE OF THE UNION**

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has been chosen to deliver the Democratic response to President Bush's annual State of the Union Address on Jan. 28. The nationally televised response will give our governor and the state of Kansas a massive audience across the nation. Sebelius has generated national buzz by winning two terms in a traditionally Republican state and working rather effectively with a GOP dominated legislature. She is widely believed to have her eye on running for the U.S. Senate in 2010. She served recently as chairwoman of the Democratic Governors Association.

It is a pleasure to serve you in Topeka. Please feel free to contact me at any time. You can also view my newsletters online at [www.sydneycarlin.com](http://www.sydneycarlin.com)

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