

## State House OKs budget reductions

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The Kansas House of Representatives Wednesday approved an amended bill that proposes \$305 million in budget reductions and cuts the base-aid-per-pupil by \$66 for the current fiscal year.

State Reps. Tom Hawk and **Sydney Carlin** voted against the bill - which passed 75-49 - citing the negative impact on K-12 education late in the current school year. "It cuts K-12 education too much," Hawk said.

The bill is an amended version of a proposal put forward by the House Appropriations Committee Friday that recommended a \$323 million budget reduction. That bill would have led to an \$88 cut in per-pupil aid.

Although the current bill sees an increase in K-12 funding above what it was amended from, Hawk said he was hoping for a number closer to the Governor's initial proposal. That proposal, he said, would see a \$22 per-pupil cut in base aid.

"The governor proposed to hold K-12 harmless," Hawk said.

Hawk said transfers of dollars left in some agency funds, rather than cuts, could have been a more appropriate way to make up the \$300 million needed because of lower-than-expected state revenues. Under the current bill, a little less than half of the adjustments are spending cuts and the remainder are transfers and the refinancing of state bonds.

"There is a philosophical argument about when is the best time to do one-time transfers," he said. "Since you only get to make those transfers one-time, some people think we should hold off until 2010. I think we should give (the schools) as much as possible now," he said. "A substantial part of the school year is over and there will be tougher cuts in 2010."

Hawk said the bill now goes to a House-Senate conference committee. The Senate's own budget balancing bill, approved Thursday, would see only a \$7 million cut in K-12 education.

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