

Sydney's Weekly Newsletter

February 12, 2010

RECISSION BILL PASSES

Thursday morning the House passed the 2010 Recission bill, Senate Substitute for HB 2222, which makes additional budget adjustments for this fiscal year. The Governor is given some power in Kansas law to do allotments during the time the Legislature is not in session. This bill takes care of cuts that the Governor proposes for this year but did not have the power to do. The bill passed with a handful of opponents.

The bill contains an increase in the Department of Labor budget to address increased unemployment benefits for laid-off workers, as well as an additional \$5 million to supplement the budget of the Judicial branch, which was accidentally shorted in the original 2010 budget and faces furloughs of non-judicial personnel the next few months. It reduces the postage allowance for legislators by 50% and an amendment was added that reduces legislative pay by 5%. It also reduces the pay of all elected state officials and limits the days that legislative leadership can voucher when they come to the Capitol on non-session days. These cuts will save about \$1.5 million.

The bill now cuts over \$2 million from the legislative budget, and cuts funding from the departments of Commerce and Transportation, the Securities Commissioner, and transfers funds from the Economic Development Initiatives Fund and the State Housing Trust Fund to the state general fund. Another amendment shifts funds around to help pay for a program for Kansans with developmental disabilities, allowing us to recover federal funds that were lost in Medicaid support.

The bill, which trims more than \$92 million in state spending, now goes to conference committee. The state still faces balancing the 2011 fiscal year budget and a projected \$400 million deficit in the next fiscal year. Governor Parkinson has called for a tax increase to bridge the revenue shortfall, saying without more revenue "tens of thousands of Kansans will be dramatically hurt", particularly the elderly and disabled.

SUPREME COURT RULES ON REOPENING SCHOOL LAWSUIT

The Kansas Supreme Court ruled today against reopening *Montoy v. State of Kansas*, the controversial lawsuit on state funding of public education. The case would have only been remanded to the district courts, and it is more efficient to start with a new case, as some of the original schools in the case will have dropped out and some new schools will join it.

This is a shortened version of my newsletter because with my mother's death I have had family obligations and can't stick around to write up other items at this time—life is precious.

Sydney Carlin

State Representative
66th District