

**SYDNEY CARLIN  
REPRESENTATIVE, 66<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT  
CARLIN'S NEWSLETTER**



May 1, 2009

**At the Statehouse**

The final weeks of the annual legislative session will be marked by anxiety over a predicted \$328 million deficit in the 2010 fiscal year, the only business that **MUST** be conducted during this session. Lobbyists and legislators are likely to conduct a heated debate over the mix of spending cuts and tax adjustments required to balance the budget.

But one thing we know is that the first version of the House Omnibus - - **the Final budget bill was killed on the Floor on Friday evening after long hours of debate receiving 53 votes/losing 62.** I did not support the bill, which had included 5% state employee pay cuts, (later eliminated with an amendment) and no tax revenue support. It was an attempt by those across the aisle to make state employees pay for the damages and it was a bad plan.

**The new Democratic Governor, Mark Parkinson,** requested the opportunity to speak to a joint session of the Legislature. Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, and Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka, said they would welcome the opportunity for Parkinson to share his thoughts on the budget quagmire. But House Speaker Mike O'Neal said that although a presentation to lawmakers from the new governor would be appropriate, there was no time to adequately prepare for a Wednesday afternoon speech. "It's not happening today," O'Neal said.

Parkinson, sworn into office Tuesday night upon the resignation of Kathleen Sebelius, sought the time slot to provide a framework for his approach to the "wrap-up" portion of the 2009 session. Usually, there is a joint session of the two houses to hear from the Governor at the beginning of the regular session. The change of Governor's as a veto session starts is unprecedented . . . even more so in this unprecedented economic crisis as well.

Extraordinary circumstances leading to a sudden change in the governor's office make it necessary to get a clear signal from Parkinson on his plan for dealing with the budget deficit. Governor Parkinson is a former member of both the House and Senate. He was elected lieutenant governor in 2006 when Sebelius was re-elected governor for a second term.

**KSU To Assist With Swine Flu Outbreak**

A new flu strain has killed over 150 people in Mexico and a toddler in the U.S. It has sickened dozens more Americans, including a married couple in Abilene. Kansas State researchers held a news conference at the Bio-security Research Institute on campus. Here in Topeka, Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, the state health officer, briefed the House and Senate health committees on the outbreak.

**Tax Amnesty**

Three Republican senators proposed that the state use an amnesty program to lure tax evading Kansans into paying back taxes and help the state with its budget problems. Such a program would allow people to pay their outstanding taxes without penalty or interest for a set period of time. The state used a 2-months-long amnesty program late in 2003 and collected more than \$30 million in back taxes.

Granting amnesty to people who have not paid their taxes on time is not an ideal way to raise money, Senator Derek Schmidt said, but it's "preferable to raising taxes or cutting vital services even more deeply." Joining Schmidt in proposing the program were Republican Senators Les Donovan, of Wichita, and Jay Emler, of Lindsborg. Donovan is chairman of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee and Emler, chairman of the Senate budget-writing Ways and Means Committee.

Last week, House Speaker Mike O'Neal, a Hutchinson Republican, said he wants legislators to first seriously consider furloughing state government employees to save money. He also said he would oppose efforts by Parkinson to delay the phase-out of tax cuts or decouple state taxes from federal tax breaks as a way to help fix a \$328 million budget deficit (so much for the honeymoon for our new Governor).

The spokesperson for Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), Jane Carter, has called furloughs "a shortsighted solution" to the state's budget problems. The proposal talked about furloughing "non-essential" employees. The U.S. Department of Labor, concerned about spiraling unemployment, has put states on notice that it will closely monitor furlough programs. So, a furlough program is short-sighted, unfair and usually fails to save that much money.

O'Neal said the savings from a furlough program would probably save some employees from being laid off. If that is true, the state agencies presently have the authority to furlough employees or use other flexible management techniques to accomplish their missions. It does not need to be mandated. And labor needs are very different among agencies . . . I voted against the plan.

### **Insurance Coverage For Autism**

There was an attempt to force the Speaker of the House to bring a bill out of committee and to the House floor for debate on Wednesday. The bill HB 2357, which would require insurance coverage for autistic children, did not have hearings until late in the session and was not voted on in committee. Autism is affecting many more children, or is being recognized much more frequently. Early treatment often prevents kids from serious disability and provides services that allow them to have much more success in schools and social situations. I supported the effort to bring it to the floor for discussion, but it failed and the bill was left in committee on a 60 to 60 vote. It takes 70 votes to forcibly pull a bill to the floor.

### **Vetoes**

The governor vetoed some line items in HB 2373, the 2010 budget bill (funding for KTEC and limits on how higher education institutions could spend the federal stimulus money); an abortion bill, SB 218; HB 2121 containing changes in dairy labeling; the Coal Plant bill, HB 2014; and HB 2172 which added a bunch of tax exemptions which would further narrow our tax base. We may have some action to override these vetoes at some time during the wrap up.

### **Save Postage and Paper**

You can receive my weekly newsletter during the session by requesting it at:  
[Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov](mailto:Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov)

### **Keep in Touch**

It is a special honor to serve as your state representative. I value and need your input on the various issues facing state government. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions. My office address is Room L79, Docking State Office Building, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7677 or call the legislative hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me.

Additionally, you can e-mail me at [Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov](mailto:Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov). You can also follow the legislative session online at [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org) or review my previous newsletters at [www.sydneycarlin.com](http://www.sydneycarlin.com)

Thank you for letting me serve you as your Representative.