

# **From The Desk Of: Senator Jay Scott Emler**

**Kansas Senate 35<sup>th</sup> District Representative**

**Week of January 18-21, 2005**



## **Health Care:**

On Tuesday January 18<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Republican Caucus, led by Senator Jim Barnett, announced healthcare initiatives for the 2005 Legislative Session. Unlike the Governor's proposed healthcare plan, the Senate Republicans propose an expanded healthcare assistance program without a tax increase.

### **The New Healthcare Initiative Includes:**

- **Expanding the 340B prescription drug program at federally qualified clinics**
- **Expanding prescription drug assistance program to provide new funding for registered nurses and pharmacy personnel**
- **Promoting expanded enrollment in the Together Rx Access and other Pharmacy Assistance Programs**
- **Encouragement of increased utilization of Health Savings Accounts**
- **Childhood and young adult obesity prevention efforts**
- **Increased statewide tobacco prevention efforts**

## **Used Car Sales Tax Repeal**

Senate Bill 23, to repeal the sales tax provision enacted during the 2004 Legislative Session on the private sale of a motor vehicle. A refund procedure will be established for excess state and local sales tax amounts collected. This bill would revert back to the old system where buyers would list the amount they paid for a vehicle and pay taxes based on that assessment. Senate bill 23 passed out of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee and was debated on the floor of the Senate. On

a motion by Senator Schmidt, Senate Bill 23 was advanced to Final Action and roll call. On roll call, the vote was: Yeas 40, Nays 0 and Senate Bill 23 passed as amended, and is now in the Kansas House of Representatives.

### **Methamphetamine:**

On Monday, January 24, the Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to take action on Senate Bill 27. The bill would make it more difficult for would be methamphetamine producers to access the tablet form of pseudoephedrine.

### **Death Penalty:**

The Senate Judiciary Committee is scheduled to deliberate three key Senate Bills pertaining to the death penalty beginning next week.

### **Education:**

Education, well known and much debated, returns in the 2005 session. The Senate Education Committee will bring fresh ideas to an old debate as it includes five new members and a new Chairperson, Sen. Jean Schodorf. Educational funding will top the list of goals to accomplish during this legislative session. However, the Kansas Supreme Court has directed the Legislature to enact a "suitable" education plan by April 12. In addition, the Kansas Supreme Court has prohibited the legislature from using past data to determine what actual costs are. This could leave the Legislature, at least for this year, forced to bring in testimony from teachers and other education experts so legislators can assign values for the true costs of educational services.

### **Toll Free Legislative Hotline**

The State Library will continue its practice of operating the toll free hotline for Kansans to call their legislators and leave brief messages. The hotline number is 1-800-432-3924.

If you are receiving this newsletter and really would like to be taken off my list, just let me know. My legislative district includes: Barton, Dickinson, Ellsworth,

Lincoln, Marion, McPherson, and Rice. If you know of others that would like to receive this newsletter, have them contact me and I will add them to my list. I prefer to send by e-mail since the cost is essentially free, but I do have a limited legislative postage allowance, which is largely reserved for distributing this letter.

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