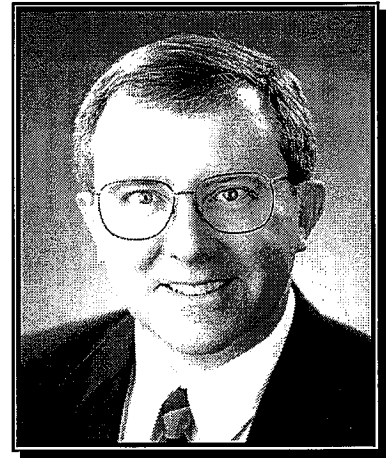


From The Desk Of...

Jay Scott Emler

Kansas Senate 35th District



~Week of January 16 - January 20, 2006~

Legislative committees have been meeting this past week, and hearing testimony concerning bills that were carried over from last year's session, as well as newly introduced legislation

- **THE ESTATE TAX**

The Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee heard testimony regarding Senate Bill 356, designed to repeal the existing estate tax in the State of Kansas. Senate Bill 365 is designed to replace the existing estate tax with a stand alone estate tax developed specifically for Kansas.

- **EDUCATION**

The Senate Education Committee took an in-depth look at the recent Post Audit school study. No proposals have been made regarding the study. However, legislators continue to look at different formula and funding alternatives.

- **FLOOR ACTION**

On Wednesday, the Senate confirmed 36 nominees to various state boards and authorities, including eight nominees to the new Kansas Health Policy Authority, and three members of the new Kansas Electric Transmission Authority.

The Senate took action on three small bills Thursday. A pay increase for public defenders and a small change in the probate code concerning notification of surviving spouses were approved, as was allowing rural independent phone companies to continue to base their rates on embedded costs, rather than forward looking costs.

- **AGRICULTURE**

Numerous bills recommended by the Select joint Committee on Energy will come before the committee next week. Several bills deal with tax credits and other incentives for producing and selling biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel.

- **FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE**

Two bills regarding uninsured motorists were heard this week. The committee will continue looking at the bills Wednesday.

- **JUDICIARY**

On Thursday, the committee amended and then passed a bill similar to Jessica's Law. The bill will increase prison sentences for repeat sexual offenders and offenders who prey on children.

A bill expanding the Attorney General's ability to seize property purchased with proceeds of Medicaid fraud, passed the committee and will be considered on the floor this week.

- **WAYS AND MEANS**

A bill creating the position of Inspector General was recommended to be passed as amended. The Inspector General will be appointed by the Attorney General, and will investigate potential fraud in the Medicaid, MediKan, Health Wave, and state employee health programs. The Inspector General will then pass fraud cases on to the Attorney General for prosecution.

- **COMMERCE**

The Commerce Committee received a report from Kansas Inc. that clearly shows that agency has finally become refocused on its mission of providing unbiased credible information regarding economic development issues in Kansas. The committee also received a review of the Schlitterbahn Vacation Village project in Wyandotte County. Phase One will cost approximately \$450,000,000. The entire project is slated to cost over \$1 billion.

- **UTILITIES**

Several bills were introduced and we held a hearing on SB 349. It was passed favorably to be debated by the full Senate. Hearings this week will be on SB 350, which is known as the SBC/ATT deregulation bill.

- **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 counties. 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.

Senator, 35th District
State Capitol Building, Room 449-N
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-7354
emler@senate.state.ks.us