

From The Desk Of...

Jay Scott Emler

Kansas Senate 35th District



~Week of January 23 - January 27, 2006~

- **ON THE FLOOR**

The Senate passed 11 bills during today's session, including three bills relating to fraud and false claims in the Medicaid system. All three bills passed 40-0. While in committee, SB 327 was amended to make the Inspector General an appointee of the Attorney General, rather than the Governor. The other two bills, SB 326 and SB 342, passed as amended by the Judiciary committee.

Senate Bill 334, also known as the criminal sex offender bill, will be voted on Friday, January 27.

- **AGRICULTURE**

The Agriculture committee held the first day of a multi-day hearing on SB 387, which requires all gasoline sold in Kansas to contain 10% ethanol and all diesel sold in Kansas to contain 2% biodiesel by the year 2010. The hearing will continue next Tuesday. The committee will hold hearings on three other biofuel-related bills next week, dealing with tax credits and exemptions and an incentive fund for biofuel producers and mixers.

- **ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION**

Subcommittees are beginning to meet, including one from the Assessment and Taxation committee that will look at the Kansas estate tax and Senate bills 356 and 365. The subcommittee's first meeting is slated for next Tuesday.

- **COMMERCE**

The Commerce committee is continuing to deal with issues relating to STAR bonds and the disposal of excess land acquired through eminent domain. SB 360, which deals with tax incentive use and eminent domain, will be heard by the committee next Tuesday.

- **JUDICIARY**

Senate bills 323 and 398, and SCR 1612, all dealing with eminent domain, will be heard on Tuesday and Wednesday. Proponents of each will speak on Tuesday, with opponents appearing before the committee on

Wednesday. Committee action is expected next week on bills pertaining to DUI offenders with excessively high blood alcohol concentrations and charging for access to publicly available district court records. SB 341, a "super drunk" bill, provides for greater penalties when a driver's BAC is higher than .16. SB 353 allows counties to charge reasonable fees for electronic copies of district court records. The committee will hold hearings on two bills relating to animal cruelty, SB 402 and SB 408, next Thursday.

- **PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE**

Medicare Part D continues to be a hot topic, as the Financial Institutions and Insurance and Ways and Means committees both heard overviews of the program. Representatives from the insurance industry as well as AARP spoke about the problems being encountered by senior citizens enrolled in the plan.

- **UTILITIES**

The Utilities Committee held two days of hearings on SB 350 regarding deregulation of telecommunications. We will hold two more days of hearings next week. Additionally, we held informational hearings on Low Income Energy Assistance Program and Weatherization Programs.

The Senate chambers will be rededicated this morning with several past Senate presidents in attendance.

- **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