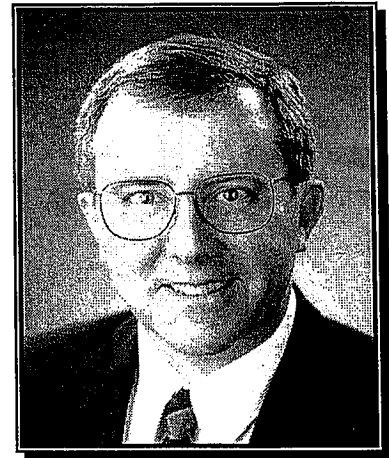


From The Desk Of...

Jay Scott Emler

Kansas Senate 35th District



~Week of February 27 - March 3, 2006~

- **School Finance**

The bipartisan Senate leadership unveiled their school finance plan (SB 582), and the Senate Education committee held briefings on that plan and the plans introduced by the House bipartisan leadership (HB 2986) and Senator Barnett (SB 501). The Senate bipartisan plan calls for a \$660 million increase in state-mandated funding for school districts over the next three years and creates a new category of students labeled "High At-Risk" in the state's five largest school districts. Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP), Special Education funding and at-risk weighting will also increase. Over three years, the measure would provide \$480 million in new state money to districts and would require districts to match that with \$180 million of local money. The committee will hear SB 582 next week.

- **Claims Bill**

SB 480, authorizing payment for claims against the state, was approved by a vote of 40-0, on Wednesday. Most of the claims will be paid from the motor vehicle fuel tax fund, though claims for personal injuries, lost wages, and loss or damage to personal property will also be paid out of the State General Fund or the accounts for various correctional facilities.

- **State Employee Pay**

The Senate, on Wednesday, approved SB 577, which provides a 2.5% pay raise for all unclassified state employees, except legislators, and provides a step movement for classified employees at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2007. Pay raises for non-elected legislative branch employees will be distributed on the basis of merit. The bill passed by a vote of 36-4.

- **Funeral Picketing**

The Federal and State Affairs committee approved SCR 1623 on Wednesday, which commends members of the Patriot Guard and American Legion Riders for their intervention at funerals picketed by Mr. Fred Phelps and the members of the Westboro Baptist Church. It condemns the protesting of military funerals by Westboro's members and states that the church's beliefs and activities "do not reflect the true spirit of the people of Kansas."

- **Workers Compensation**

Last Friday, after the weekly newsletter was sent, SB 461 passed the Senate on a vote of 28 to 12. The bill clarifies that administrative law judges (ALJ) must follow the law that has been in place for many years, requiring ALJ's to consider the "aging process" when determining a claimant's disability. Additionally, the bill prohibits a claimant from reopening the case if the claimant is laid-off for "economic reasons". Testimony defined "economic reasons" as a "downturn" in the economy.

- **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.

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