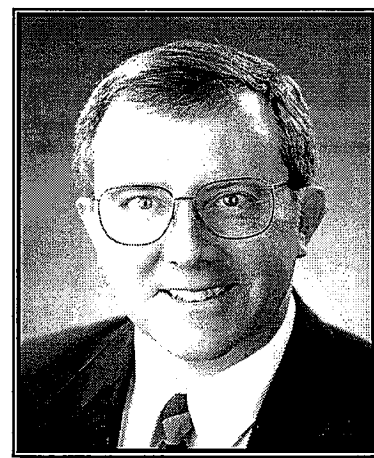


# From The Desk Of...

## Jay Scott Emler

Kansas Senate 35th District



~Week of March 6 - March 10, 2006~

- **Adoption**

The Senate approved a pair of adoption bills on Thursday. HB 2562 and HB 2665 both passed 40-0. HB 2562 amends current law by allowing any relative of a child to file a petition to waive an assessment of the advisability of adopting the child. Currently, only a grandparent of the child can file the petition. HB 2665 allows the court to consider what is in the best interests of the child during termination of parental rights proceedings, including stepparent adoptions involving a non-consenting parent.

- **Gaming**

The Federal and State Affairs committee will begin hearing SB 587 Friday morning. The bill authorizes up to 7,000 slot machines divided among dog and horse racetracks in Crawford, Sedgwick, Wyandotte and Ford counties (if a track is built in Ford county). Destination casinos in Wyandotte and either Crawford or Cherokee counties are also authorized by the bill. Seventy-five percent of revenues generated by the bill will go into the State General Fund and the other 25 percent will go to local governments to provide property tax relief. The committee will continue discussing the bill next week.

- **Machinery and Equipment Tax Exemption**

The Assessment and Taxation committee heard briefings from Secretary of Revenue, Joan Wagon, and committee staff on a pair of machinery and equipment tax exemption proposals. The committee heard from proponents of HB 2619, which exempts commercial and industrial machinery and equipment from state property taxes, and Sub HB 2525, which exempts some telecommunications and railroad machinery and equipment from property taxes, on Thursday. Hearings on the bills will continue next week.

- **School Finance**

SB 584, the bipartisan Senate leadership school finance plan, took up much of the Education committee's time this week. Hearings on the bill were held Tuesday and Wednesday, and the

committee will continue working on the bill next week. The Education committee also heard SB 501, Senator Barnett's school finance plan, and will work on it as well next week.

- **Supreme Court Justice Selection**

The Senate debated SCR 1606, a constitutional amendment making Supreme Court Justices subject to Senate confirmation, on Wednesday. The amendment failed on final action Thursday, receiving 22 votes, five short of the required 27.

- **Nuclear Generating Facility, Security Guards**

HB 2703 would enact the Nuclear Generating Facility Security Guard Act. This bill would authorize an armed nuclear security guard to use physical force against another person who is on the facility's property, including the fenced area, if the guard believes the person is causing or will cause property damage, use criminal weapons, or is criminally trespassing. The bill defines criminally trespassing as "knowingly entering or remaining unlawfully on the property, including the fenced area, of a nuclear generating facility". Criminal trespassing would be a severity level 6, personal felony. The bill passed on a vote of 37-2.

- **Liens for Utility Services Provided by Municipally Owned or Operated Utility**

HB 2592 would create a lien upon a property receiving services from a municipally-owned or operated utility, if the municipality fails to receive payment for the services provided. For property that is rented to a tenant who has unpaid fees for utility services provided by a municipality, the lien would not attach to the property. Nor would a lien be attached if the user is a state or federal agency. This matter passed last session, but was not uniform. This bill applies uniformly throughout Kansas. The bill passed on a vote of 37-3.

- **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