

### VOTE

The Kansas Primary is Tuesday, August 2. It is critical that KOSE members and their families get to the polls to vote. Primary races are sometimes thought not to be that important, but as we have seen in recent years: Primary Elections have Consequences. If you know your elected official has NOT been representing your interests, doesn't respond to your emails or calls, then it is quite likely that you need a new one!

Do your research. Read as much as you can about each candidate's stance on issues important to you; give them a call if you aren't sure where they stand on your issues. Most candidates have a website or Facebook page where you can get their contact information. Be watching for a Voter Guide to come to you from AFT-KS in the near future.

Another big issue around elections is that the "other" side will attempt to paint candidates in poor light. If your mailbox is flooded with mailers and postcards, check to determine who has PAID for the mailing. Again, do some research...just Google it! If you are unable to determine who sent the mailing, it may have been paid for by those who don't even LIVE in Kansas.

Also, check here: [www.myvoteinfo.voteks.org](http://www.myvoteinfo.voteks.org) to see if you are currently registered AND if you are registered as a Republican or a Democrat. (We have heard that some voters have had surprises when they check the site.) The last day to REGISTER to vote in the August Primary is JULY 12.

**Don't fall for sound bytes or cool lines...**

**Be an informed voter.**

### KOSE Election Results

**President:** Lisa Ochs

**Vice President:** Juanita Beck

**Secretary:** Sarah LaFrenz-Falk

**Treasurer:** Jennifur Hymon-Harpe (appointed to replace Marjorie Riggen)

**Unit 1:** Derrick Baxter

**Unit 2:** Lynette Lewis

**Unit 3:** Irene Soto, Debi Schumacher

**Unit 4:** Grace Decker

**Unit 6:** Laura Calhoun, Kevin Johnson

As a reminder, we had no candidates for the Unit 16 seat and the *unrepresented* unit's seat. The Board has the ability to appoint individuals to these positions, so please contact KOSE if you know individuals in these units who would be interested in holding a seat on the KOSE board. KOSE Board members are elected/appointed to two year terms. Please step forward.



From L-R, Lynette Lewis, Grace Decker, Jennifur Hymon-Harpe, Sarah LaFrenz-Falk, Irene Soto, Kevin Johnson, Debi Schumacher, Laura Calhoun, Lisa Ochs. Not pictured: Derrick Baxter, Juanita Beck

## ***KOSE members at the Statehouse***

Over the past three legislative sessions, KOSE members have spent significant time at the Statehouse testifying before committees and speaking with individual legislators about working conditions. Thanks to KOSE members John Bates (now retired), Derrick Baxter, Juanita Beck, Laura Calhoun, Leonard Fishburn, Anita Lara, Lynette Lewis, Kyle Nuckolls, Lon Oberman, Bob Parry, Chris Staley, Marjorie Rikken, Irene Soto, Dave Vennell, and Rick Wiley for being willing to step up and speak out!

During the 2016 Legislative Session, KOSE pursued three bills to improve working conditions for state employees. The three bills were: HB 2559 (state agencies required to develop minimum safe staffing levels, report on progress towards reaching those levels, and disclose to the public risks of falling below those levels), HB2560 (required breaks and lunch periods for executive branch state employees; capping mandatory overtime for executive branch state employees), and HB 2679 (provides yearly pay increases for state employees funded by closing tax loopholes). Throughout the Legislative Session, KOSE members circulated petitions and encouraged their co-workers to contact legislators and request these bills receive hearings.

### **KOSE members' work pays off**

The most common question KOSE-covered employees ask is "When I am going to get a raise?" For uniformed corrections officers and state hospital workers, the answer to that question is: This year!

After three long years of legislative testimony and work with the media to publicize the dangerous working conditions at state correctional facilities and state hospitals, the Kansas Legislature has finally allocated funds for a pay increase for the state hospitals and uniformed correction officers. As a reminder, classified employees can only receive a pay increase if there is a specific legislative appropriation for a pay increase. This pay increase provides a direct example of what can happen when members work together to make their voices heard.

All state employees need raises...but the only way to make that happen is to come together, speak up, and refuse to be silenced. If your position or agency was not included in this year's pay increases, get involved! Join your fellow members at the Statehouse and tell your story!

### **KPERS**

The second-most common question KOSE-covered employees ask is "Is the Legislature going after my KPERS?" The KPERS situation is a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that the 2016 Legislative Session contained no major changes to KPERS plan design. In other words, it is still a pension plan, and not a 401(k). The bad news is the State is delaying \$100

million in employer contributions to KPERS in order to balance the budget. The State will make the base KPERS contribution required by law, but will delay paying the additional funds that were required under the 2012 pension reform law. These additional funds are an essential part of restoring KPERS long-term financial health. It is exactly this type of payment delay/deferral that caused KPERS to develop a large unfunded liability. Your retirement should not be placed at risk because the Kansas Legislature refuses to adopt responsible revenue and tax policies. Know how your State Senator and State Representative voted. If they didn't vote to protect your KPERS, don't vote for them this fall.

### ***Weighing the Options: Classified or Unclassified?***

As you know, the State began offering many employees the option of remaining classified or moving to unclassified service in 2015. While the promise of a pay increase seems tempting to many, there are factors that should be considered prior to making the change.

Classified positions have protection under the Civil Service Act. This means that once the employee has completed initial probation, that employee has appeal rights to the Civil Service Board for matters of suspension, demotion and dismissal.

Employees in unclassified positions may have coverage under the KOSE contract but do not have a way to appeal suspension, demotion and dismissal. Unclassified employees are not placed on the salary matrix but are paid by a salary approved by Governor Brownback.

As the state has continued to miss **lowered** revenue estimates due to the failed tax policies, consider if your Agency is fee-funded/grant-funded **or** receives the bulk of its budget from the State General Fund. Those Agencies which are funded from the State General Fund may suffer cuts mid-year.

Each employee must consider the decision based on individual circumstances.

Consider these factors:

- Whether the pay increase offered is more than your longevity
- How close you are to retirement
- How important you feel workplace protections are given the culture of your Agency and management team
- The State budget

This is a very personal decision. If you are offered a raise in exchange for going unclassified and have additional questions, please call the KOSE office at 785-354-1174.