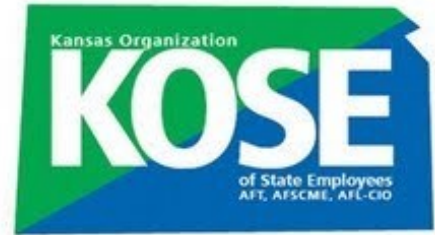


Frontline December-January

2016-17

A Publication of Kansas Organization of State Employees



Movement toward the Middle in Kansas Elections

In the 40 seat Senate, where 21 votes are needed to prevent or move legislation, the number of moderate senators grew from five to 12-14. When moderate senators combine with the nine Senate Democrats it is possible to block or move bills in the Senate Chamber.

In the 125 seat House, the 40 Democrats combined with moderate republicans, should be enough to get to the magic number of 63 to block or move legislation.

For the 2016 November elections, AFT-Kansas (KAPE-COPE) made recommendations in 30 Senate contested races and 14 of the recommended candidates prevailed. In the House, recommendations were made in 63 contested races and 34 of the recommended candidates prevailed.

The results of the election were due to the actions of multiple groups working to get good candidates elected. KOSE members will need to stay connected with their elected representatives. They represent YOU!

New Leadership at the Capitol

On December 5, Legislators gathered in Topeka to select leadership within their parties. With eight new Senators and 31 new House members, we've seen a shift back to more moderate thinking and talking, even by Senator Susan Wagle and Senator Jim Denning, both who scored big zeroes on our issues last session.

It is possible leadership will continue to distance themselves from the governor's policies. While the House leadership is under the control of Representative Ron Ryckman and Representative Scott Schwab, both of whom have been staunch allies of the current governor in his extremist positions, the House is more balanced with moderates than we have seen since the exodus of in 2012.

| Senate Majority (Republicans) | Senator | Senate Minority (Democrats) | House Member |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| President | Susan Wagle (Wichita) | Leader | Anthony Hensley (Topeka) |
| Vice-President | Jeff Longbine (Emporia) | Assistant Leader | Laura Kelly (Topeka) |
| House Majority (Republicans) | | House Minority (Democrats) | |
| Speaker of the House | Ron Ryckman (Olathe) | Leader | Jim Ward (Wichita) |
| Speaker Pro Tem | Scott Schwab (Olathe) | Assistant Leader | Stan Frownfelter (KC) |



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RISE UP Kansas Coalition Press Conference

On December 7, Executive Director Rebecca Proctor joined a panel of other concerned Kansas groups at the State Capitol. The Kansas Center for Economic Growth, Kansas Action for Children, Kansas NEA, KOSE, and the Kansas Contractors Association gathered to share with the public a budget plan to move Kansas forward into the future.

As positions remain unfilled at Kansas Agencies, State employees are working mandatory overtime and workers and citizens are put at risk due to the previous budget cuts, this coalition of partners presented a comprehensive tax plan to move forward.

While most people across the state are in favor of repealing the 2012 LLC tax exemptions for businesses, this move alone will not bring in enough money to solve the budget crisis. Additional components include reinstating the third income tax bracket. Even with this third bracket 70% of Kansans would stay at their current rate, reducing the KS food sales tax rate from 6.5 %, the second highest in the nation, to 5% which would put more money back in the pockets of working Kansas families. And finally, enacting a temporary, three-year sweep from the Ks Highway Fund to avoid a sales tax increase while pairing the sweep with an \$0.11 increase in the Kansas gas tax.

Is this the perfect plan? Probably not, but knowing Governor Brownback has chosen not to address the budget until 2017, this is at least a place to start.



Anticipate talking with your elected House member and Senator about what you need for your family to thrive. Many legislators hold “coffee” or “lunches” in their home districts. You need not be an expert on the state budget; you only need to be an expert on your family budget. **Tell your story.**

New Bills to Watch for in 2017

During the two-day legislative retreat in November attended by KOSE coalition partners and hosted by AFT-KS, it was determined that KOSE will pre-file or file as many as six bills in the 2017 Legislative Session. Those bills include: the anti-workplace bullying bill which would mandate each agency have a bullying policy. Also, included in this bill is a recording/reporting component and the management of those reports.

KOSE is also filing a bill which would include guaranteed breaks and lunches for executive branch employees with a cap on mandatory overtime. KOSE will introduce a bill which provides for safe minimum staffing levels at all agencies. As the Kansas budget remains in deep distress, KOSE will file a bill which could potentially fund pay increases by closing tax loopholes.

Two other pieces of possible legislation include repealing House Bill 2391 (2015) which stripped many public-sector workers of their Civil Service protections and filing a bill providing a study to determine the financial impact of Kansas providing OSHA “like” safety protections for Kansas public-sector workers.

KOSE understands the Kansas Supreme Court ruling on the adequacy of Kansas schools could play a large part in the direction of the 2017 Kansas Legislature, however, keeping sight of workers’ needs and rights remains the target.

KOSE will let you know when these bills may be introduced and if/when they receive a hearing.