

STATE OF KANSAS

TOM SLOAN  
REPRESENTATIVE, 45TH DISTRICT  
DOUGLAS COUNTY

STATE CAPITOL, 149-S  
300 SW 10TH AVENUE  
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612  
(785) 296-7654  
1-800-432-3924

772 HWY 40  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66049-4174  
(785) 841-1526  
tom.sloan@house.ks.gov



TOPEKA  
HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS  
CHAIRMAN: VISION 2020

MEMBER: AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
TRANSPORTATION

## Newsletter #1 2014

This is my first legislative newsletter of 2014 and I will endeavor to keep you informed about the legislative process; issues that are important, but may not receive media coverage; and my activities on behalf of Douglas County and the State.

The renovated Capitol Building is magnificent and I encourage you to visit. There is a quotation from Dwight D. Eisenhower in the Visitor's Center that I find inspirational:

“The opportunist thinks of me and today.  
The statesman thinks of us and tomorrow.”

**Legislative Initiatives:** I have introduced six bills this session. HB 2439 continues my effort to more adequately fund programs to protect and restore the state's drinking water supply lakes and rivers. For the past 7 years the Governors and Legislators have not met the legal requirement to fund the State Water Plan. While it is true that no Legislature can bind future Legislatures' actions, it is unconscionable to me that we continue to ignore the need to address shrinking water storage capacities in our lakes and decreasing water quality. HB 2439 is in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

HB 2441 addresses an issue brought to my attention by the Lawrence Police Department and is supported by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) and other law enforcement agencies across the state. The issue is that often when law enforcement officers make an arrest in a drug, human trafficking, or other organized crime case, the arrested person has a pre-paid wireless phone (“throw-away” phone). Currently law enforcement officers have no way to determine if that phone was one of many purchased by the “gang” and therefore no way to identify others who might be involved in the crime. HB 2441 would require sellers of such devices to provide the KBI information about the purchaser, just as we require pharmacists to provide information on purchasers of pseudofedrin and scrap metal dealers on sellers of certain types of metals. This bill applies only to pre-paid phones and not phones included in plans by AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, and other companies. HB 2441 is in the Utilities & Telecommunications Committee.

HB 2451 addresses my concern that owners of plug-in electric vehicles do not pay their equitable share of motor fuel taxes to support the state and local roads on which they drive. The Department of

Transportation estimates that the average Kansas driver pays \$168 per year in state motor fuel taxes. This is the largest source of funding for new highway construction, maintenance of existing highways, and assistance to city governments to help maintain state roads within their city limits. Such hybrid vehicles weigh more than their gasoline/diesel powered versions and have a slightly greater impact on roads. HB 2451 is in the Transportation Committee.

HB 2460 and HB 2465 are the result of the Kansas Electric Rate-Making Policy Summit that I organized and hosted in November 2013. Attended by leaders of Kansas electric utilities, the Kansas Corporation Commission Chairman and staff, the Citizens Utility Rate-Payer Board (CURB) officials, electric customers, the National Guard, and other stakeholders, the Summit focused on customer desires for more renewable energy. Technological advances in roof top solar, small wind turbine, heat pump, and other generation types mean that customers have more opportunities to self-generate all or some of their electricity. When customers leave the utility system, the cost of maintaining the wires, repair crews, and other services fall on the remaining customers. HB 2460 and HB 2465 seek to balance the ability and right of customers to generate some of their electricity, while recognizing that the utilities have costs associated with being the provider of last resort when the sun does not shine or the wind does not blow. Both bills are in the Utilities & Telecommunications Committee.

HB 2522 is a continuation of effort to help Marion Township residents who want improved fire protection. Currently, Osage County Fire District #4 provides coverage for most of Marion Township, but several Douglas County fire departments are located closer to the Marion residents. Under existing state law, the Osage County Commissioners may release those Douglas County residents who wish to join another fire district, but despite the efforts of Commissioner Jim Flory, County Administrator Craig Weinaug, and others, the Osage Commissioners refuse to act. HB 2522 is in the Local Government Committee and establishes a vote of the people as an alternative method by which residents may transfer to another fire district.

**National Work Benefits Kansas:** I serve on two advisory committees for the Department of Energy (DOE) and one with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); interact at the top levels of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and Environmental Protection Agency; and serve on two committees each for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and Council of State Governments (CSG) (two professional organizations for legislators). Each of these contacts offer opportunities for me to learn (e.g., about new technologies to generate electricity and reduce losses during delivery) and to provide information about what Kansans are doing to solve problems (e.g., addressing siltation rates into large reservoirs).

In addition to hosting a FERC Commissioner in Lawrence and the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) Chairman heading the Electric Rate-Making Policy Summit referenced above, last year I carried an invitation from the Corps of Engineers to the Governor for a meeting to discuss developing a 10-year partnership to preserve the large state reservoirs. The FERC Commissioner's visit focused on increasing the export of wind energy to regional states and beyond. I also took him to visit the new Bowersock hydro-electric operation (he visited the older unit previously when he was in Lawrence for

another meeting that I organized). The KCC Chairman's participation in the Rate-Making Summit helped encourage electric utility executives to work with large customers (e.g., National Guard) to develop more responsive renewable energy policies and rates.

U.S. Senator Jerry Moran has provided written and verbal support of my reappointment to the FCC advisory committee because I held public hearings in Kansas and carried the concerns and ideas of our telecommunications providers and customers to the FCC. The Pentagon has cited my work in supporting the expansion of using telecommunications capabilities (telemedicine) to help veterans receive better health care services from the Veterans Affairs staff as a model for other states to follow. During a visit to our eldest daughter and her family in North Carolina, I met with the senior staff of EPA's air quality programs (at their request) to discuss a proposal I advanced to permit utilities greater investment and operational flexibility to meet clean air standards. Their attorneys are exploring the agency's legal ability to pursue the recommendation that I formally filed during the comment period.

Whether you like the federal agencies and the White House or not, having the agency head and his/her chief deputies know Kansas issues means that our voices are heard, not just those of the more populous states.

At a meeting in Washington, D.C. at the Corps of Engineers headquarters, a staff member referenced a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that was signed in 1994 that guided Corps-Kansas water policy interactions for 10 years. I was unaware of that previous MOU and asked if a new one could be beneficial to both parties. The Corps' response was "yes," and I subsequently conveyed that suggestion to Governor Brownback. The Governor agreed to invite Corps leaders from Headquarters and regional offices in Tulsa and Kansas City, and Kansas water policy agency heads to discuss what such a MOU should contain and how it might be developed.

**Vision 2020 Committee:** As I have previously mentioned, the Vision 2020 Committee that I chair is the long range planning committee for the Legislature. We have been cited by the Kansas Water Authority as the instigators of their more comprehensive water planning process and frequently assist state agencies and community organizations to collaborate.

Based on public hearings and private conversations, the Board of Cosmetology and the Board of Barbering jointly developed a process to eliminate duplicate inspections of barber and cosmetology shops that are dually licensed. While not saving lots of money, it represents a collaborative approach to regulation.

The Committee also held public hearings on whether a need exists to formalize training and certification of pharmacy technicians. As you may know, there are four organizations that represent pharmacists in Kansas: the State Board of Pharmacy and professional organizations that represent hospital, multi-site, and independent pharmacies. As a result of encouragement from the Committee,

the groups agreed on legislation authorizing the State Board to develop an appropriate plan. The ultimate result will be better service and protection for consumers.

We also continue our efforts to assist the primary universities develop high performance computing capabilities and connectivity to enable, among other things, more successfully competing for federal research grants, and genome research and data sharing. While part of the problem is a lack of state financial assistance, the lack of a coordinated approach from KU, KSU, and WSU researchers and administrators also contributes. As was pointed out in our hearings, all of the surrounding states have invested millions of dollars in such capabilities and are reaping the benefits, while Kansas continues to lag behind. It is unlikely that we will change that direction substantially in 2014, but I continue to believe this is one of the more important long-term needs of our universities and state.

**Concluding Comments:** The legislative process is a struggle between those who want change and those who do not. The process includes legislators and citizens (including business and other groups) and citizens utilize lobbyists as well as personal contacts with legislators. Change is not always good, but maintaining the status quo indefinitely is not possible. As a legislator, I strive to raise issues when change needs to be discussed (e.g., funding water protection programs), even if other parties and legislators want to ignore the matter. While government should not and cannot solve all problems, Kansans do not benefit from policy stagnation.

**Toll free legislative hotline available to Kansas residents**

Kansas residents can ask questions about legislation, legislative procedure, state government and more by calling 1-800-432-3924. Calls are answered by experienced reference/research librarians at the State Library of Kansas and kept confidential. Lines are open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Callers can also leave brief messages to be delivered to legislators as well as request copies of bills, calendars, journals, committee agendas, voting records, and other legislative documents.**

In addition to calling the hotline, residents can text questions to 785-256-0733 (standard text message rates may apply), instant message at [www.kslib.info/ask-a-librarian](http://www.kslib.info/ask-a-librarian), or visit the State Library. The State Library is located in the north wing, on the third floor of the Kansas Capitol Building.

**Contact me:** You are welcome to visit and shadow me at the State Capitol. Your ideas about how state government can be more efficient and effective in meeting our current and forthcoming challenges and opportunities are invited. You may reach me at [tom.sloan@house.ks.gov](mailto:tom.sloan@house.ks.gov), 785-296-7654, or by writing me at the State Capitol, Room 149-S, 300 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Topeka, KS 66612.

If you find the information in this Newsletter interesting, please share it with your family, friends, and neighbors. I believe that it is important that people know what their elected officials do. Your feedback also tells me what issues are important to you.

