

Rep. Sloan Speaks on Energy and Military-Civilian Issues

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in two National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) Task Force meetings. As a member of the Energy Supply Task Force, Sloan participated in educational and policy discussions related to natural gas-fueled vehicle emissions and performance; small, modular nuclear reactor development; the role of distributed generation (e.g., solar) in the electric grid; energy storage as a grid asset; and the Quebec/California Carbon Trading Partnership.

The NCSL Energy Policy Summit covered the additional topics of cyber security; grid vulnerability to electro-magnetic pulses; and balancing climate protection and the mix of energy generating technologies to maintain an affordable, reliable electric system.

“Upward pressures on electric rates due to the need to replace aged infrastructure, protect against cyber threats, and transition to lower greenhouse gas emitting generation, requires policy-makers and regulators to balance risk management with affordability,” Sloan said. “We have the technological knowledge to prevent almost all weather and man-made threats to electric system reliability and address climate issues, but the cost of electricity would be prohibitively high. Our discussions focused on how to balance those competing interests.”

Rep. Sloan presented information on the Interstate Electric Transmission Siting Compact developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) that could make it easier to develop Kansas' wind and solar generation potential. He also discussed the recent Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-Kansas Region Summit that he organized.

The NCSL Military & Veterans Affairs Task Force heard presentations on initiatives to ease the transition into civil employment for returning military veterans; the Army's Regional Environmental and Energy Offices (there is one in Kansas City, MO) to work with local governments to sustain military training capabilities; how the Department of Defense works with local communities when base expansion or closures occur; and what legislation related to military and veteran issues have been passed in the respective states.

Sloan moderated and spoke on a panel entitled “Veterans and Civilian Employment: State Legislative Approaches.” Approximately 1 million military veterans will be discharged from the Services as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars wind down. Veterans have almost twice as high an unemployment rate as do

their non-veteran peer age group members. The Department of Defense, NCSL Task Force, and state and private organizations across the country are attempting to reduce those unemployment statistics.

“During my comments, I focused on Kansas’ legislative efforts to have state licensing agencies recognize Department of Defense issued education and training certificates (e.g., EMT, heavy vehicle driving),” said Sloan. “If state agencies do not recognize the military’s certificates, veterans must repeat all of their previously acquired knowledge in civilian schools. This is an expensive, time consuming, and unnecessary requirement. I also talked about our efforts to expedite the licensure of spouses moving to Kansas with licenses in other states (e.g., teachers).”

Rep. Sloan is serving his 10th term in the Kansas House of Representatives. He is Chairman of the Vision 2020 Committee and a member of the Agriculture & Natural Resources and Transportation Committees.

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