



# News From The Capitol

**Representative Don Hineman**

**March 6, 2012**

## 2012 Issues Survey Results

My 2012 Issues Survey is now closed, and the results have been analyzed. A total of 157 individuals completed the survey... 127 residents of District 118, and 30 from outside the district. Many of those were from neighboring counties.

53% of respondents either felt that property taxes were most in need of a cut, or that all three major tax sources (income, sales, and property) should be cut equally. Only 18.6% believe that income tax alone is the proper target for cuts.

51.3% feel it is important to keep income tax as an equal leg of the three-legged stool of financing Kansas government.

Regarding sales tax, 38.9% advised cutting the rate on June 30, 2013, as scheduled. 48% prefer to keep the sales tax rate at the current level.

61.4% of those who took the survey favor keeping a healthy cash reserve instead of using growing cash balances to restore past cuts or to reduce income tax rates.

A large majority, 78.8% of respondents, believe that school finance is an obligation of the state and must be funded with state funds, with richer districts helping to provide for poorer

districts.

65% oppose liberalizing Kansas liquor laws to allow the sale of strong beer, wine and spirits in convenience stores and grocery stores.

61% believe Kansas should expand the use of toll roads as a way to fund part of the cost of new highway construction and expansion.

60% say that current Kansas law is adequate to address the issue of cell phone use while driving.

63.4% either think that Kansas has enough gaming outlets, and that no more casinos should be authorized or believe that no casinos should have ever been allowed.

My thanks to all those who took the time to take the survey. I will use these results to guide me as we deal with the important issues facing the 2012 legislature.

## **Senior Citizens Hunting/Fishing Licenses**

Secretary Robin Jennison of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism has proposed that the state end the policy of exempting senior citizens 65 years and older from paying for hunting and fishing licenses - a practice that was first adopted in 1971. This is an issue that I take personally... I turn 65 in May!

The issue is affected by three factors:

1. Ever since the start of the recession, the state has been turning increasingly to fees instead of tax revenues to finance governmental functions whenever that makes sense. Wildlife and Parks is, of course, one of those cases where it does make sense.

2. The exemption for seniors has become more problematic now that us baby boomers are starting to "come of age", and hunting and fishing revenue has been declining as a result.

3. The problem is compounded by the fact that Wildlife and Parks receives federal money for every license sold, so that is money the state never receives if we exempt anyone from buying a license.

Here is a link to an article about a compromise that was proposed by Senator Allen Schmidt last week. I believe something like this is a reasonable solution:

<http://cjonline.com/news/2012-03-04/compromise-seen-kan-hunting-fishing-fees>

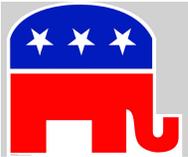
## The State Bank of KDOT

House Republican leadership recently proposed their own tax reform plan when it became evident that Governor Brownback's plan was not garnering much support.

As part of the funding mechanism for the House plan's income tax cut, \$350 million would be borrowed from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), with the promise to pay the money back at the rate of \$50 million per year for the succeeding seven years. If anyone believes that money would ever be paid back, I have some beachfront property in Lane County I would like to sell you. The fact is that the Kansas legislature has a long history of borrowing, sweeping, or just plain taking money away from KDOT and never repaying it. Since 2000 a total of **\$1.859 billion** has been taken from KDOT without repayment! Is it just coincidence that that is roughly the amount of bonded indebtedness at KDOT at the present time?

KDOT is not a bank, and I believe it is high time that the legislature quit treating it as one. Even if the money is taken now and repaid on schedule, it hinders the current T-Works construction plan by forcing KDOT to delay critical projects until a later date... a time when both construction costs and interest rates are likely to be higher. How can that be good business?

## Presidential Preference Caucus



On this coming Saturday, March 10 the Kansas Republican Party will be conducting the Presidential Preference Caucus in about 100 locations throughout the state, including one in each county in the 118th District. Participation is open to any registered member of the Kansas Republican Party, and I encourage your attendance.

No Republican candidate will have enough votes to lock up the party nomination before the primaries in other states in April, so your participation will be important! Go to the [website](#) of the Kansas GOP for more information and then click on the "Caucus: March 10" drop-down menu to learn more.

Note that this will be a good "test-run" to make sure your credentials are in order for Kansas' new voter ID law before voting in primary and general elections later this year!

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## Quick Links

Governor Brownback's January 2012 Recommended [Budget](#)

Governor Brownback's [Tax Reform Plan](#)

Governor Brownback's [Medicaid Reform Plan](#)

KPERS Study Commission [Final Report](#)

Governor Brownback's [School Finance Reform Proposal](#)

Kansas Legislative Research [Kansas Tax Facts](#)

Kansas Legislative Research [Kansas Fiscal Facts](#)

Kansas 2012 [Redistricting](#)

## Words to Live By

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**Cowboy Logic:** Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.

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**Quote of the Week:** To wish you were someone else is to waste the person you are - Sven Goran Eriksson

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**Sermon in a Sentence:** Learn from the mistakes of others; you can't live long enough to make them all yourself.