

State Representative

Don Hineman

Don's Legislative Update

February 11, 2013

Education Reform

Constitutional amendment

According to Article 6b of the Kansas Constitution, "The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state". In spite of that explicit language, in recent decades Kansas has been involved in three court suits on the question of suitability. The fact that courts have gotten involved has created great consternation among many in the legislature, and this year there is an effort to stop that cycle of lawsuits and get the courts out of school funding.

Senator Jeff King (R – Independence) has introduced a resolution to add the following sentence to Article 6b: "The financing of the educational interests of the state is exclusively a legislative power under article 2 of the constitution of the state of Kansas and as such shall be established solely by the legislature." Some believe that this stronger language would make it much harder for the courts to become involved in the future. However if this is true, those of us who live in rural Kansas should be very concerned. As the population shifts from rural to urban we are increasingly outnumbered in the legislature. So this raises the possibility that some future Kansas legislature may decide to enact school finance legislation that disadvantages rural school children. **We cannot allow that to happen.** In a democracy, the judicial system exists to provide justice for all, including protecting the rights of the minority from the rule of the majority. The principle of equitable funding is central to the goal of providing all Kansas children with the best possible education, and placing the responsibility exclusively in the hands of an increasingly urbanized legislature would present grave threat to rural Kansas.

School vouchers

Our system of free enterprise is founded on the principle that free and open competition is a good thing. Certainly that is true for private enterprise, and some are suggesting that Kansas should insert competition into its public education system in order to produce greater outcomes and reduce costs. I believe we should strive to foster competition among educators, individual attendance centers, and school districts. But some in the legislature are proposing to go further... to issue school vouchers whereby the state's current annual cost of educating a student would be paid to that family so the student could attend a private



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Visit Don's Website:
[Hineman for Kansas](#)

Useful Phone Numbers

Department On Aging
800-432-3535

Child/Adult Abuse Hotline
800-922-5330

Child & Family Services
888-369-4777

Consumer Protection
800-423-2310

Crime Tip Hotline

school.

It is easy to imagine that might create some competition, but remember that the playing field is very uneven. Private schools, by their very nature, can select who attends. So the result would be that the best and the brightest would migrate to private schools while those students who are more costly to educate would left behind in public schools with a shrinking level of funding. How can that be good for Kansas?

Interestingly, the voucher idea is surfacing at the same time that some are again beginning to talk about further school consolidation. In rural Kansas, where entire school districts may have enrollments of 100 or less, and the closest attendance center outside of the district may be thirty miles away or more, a new private school springing up to offer "competition" just doesn't make much sense. The 2010 census revealed that seventy seven of Kansas' 105 counties are losing population. A voucher system that encourages new private schools and draws students away from public schools that are already shrinking would threaten the very existence of many rural schools in Kansas.

I have high respect for the private schools throughout Kansas and the great work their dedicated educators perform. But in order for Kansas' system of excellent public education to remain strong, the private education system must remain private. Public dollars must always be reserved entirely for public education.

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Second Amendment Rights

I have received many messages recently regarding second amendment rights. I hold the right to bear arms as an essential part of who we are as Americans, and I will defend that right vigorously. Your comments are important to me, but I want to assure everyone that this legislature is not about to take any steps that would abridge the right to bear arms. That simply will not happen, and we are focusing efforts on blocking actions at the federal level that might affect those rights.

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Legislative Pages Wanted

During each legislative session each legislator has the opportunity to sponsored legislative pages to assist during House deliberations and to learn about Kansas government. I have been assigned Monday, March 11 as a page date. This opportunity is open to any junior high or senior high school student. Contact my office soon if you wish to apply.

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Upcoming Town Hall Meetings (locations to be announced)

800-252-8477

**Crime Victim Assistance
800-828-9745**

**Gov- Brownback
800-748-4408**

**Highway Road Conditions
511 (in Kansas)**

**Housing Hotline
800-752-4422**

**KanCare Assistance
866-305-5147**

**Kansas Lottery
800-544-9467**

**Legislative Hotline
800-432-3924**

**Mental Health Services
888-582-3759**

**School Safety Hotline
877-626-8203**

**Social Security
800-772-1213**

**Taxpayer Assistance
785-368-8222**

**Tax Refund Status
800-894-0318**

**Unclaimed Property
800-432-0386**

**Unemployment Insurance
800-292-6333**

**Vital Statistics
785-296-1400**

**Voter Registration
800-262-8683**

**Welfare Fraud Hotline
800-432-3913**

**Worker's Comp
800-332-0353**

Colby	Saturday, March 2	10:00 a.m.
Hoxie	Saturday, March 2	12:00 noon
Hill City	Saturday, March 2	2:00 p.m.
Oakley	Monday, March 4	10:00 a.m.
Grainfield	Monday, March 4	12:00 noon
WaKeeney	Monday, March 4	2:00 p.m.
Leoti	To be determined	

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Cowboy Logic

“If I agreed with you, we would both be wrong.”

Quote of the week

“I can explain it to you; I can’t comprehend it for you.” – Mayor Ed Koch

Sermon in a sentence

“It’s wise to under-promise and over-deliver.”

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Representative Don Hineman

Visit My Website at <http://www.hinemanforkansas.org/>

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