

# State Representative

# Don Hineman

## Don's Legislative Update

August 12, 2013

### Special Legislative Session

On Tuesday, August 6, Governor Brownback [formally ordered](#) a special session of the Kansas Legislature, to convene at 8:00 a.m. September 3 and to adjourn by 5:00 p.m., September 5. This session was called at the urging of Attorney General Derek Schmidt to ensure Kansas criminals do not have access to a legal loophole created by a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. The Court determined that in cases where criminals are sentenced to the 50 years of time served before the opportunity for a parole hearing, commonly known as Hard 50, the sentencing must be by jury and not by a judge. Currently, Kansas law says a judge makes this determination.

I concur with Governor Brownback and Attorney General Schmidt that this situation calls for a special session. To delay until the regular legislative session begins on January 13, 2014 would mean that more criminals who have committed the most heinous of crimes would be eligible for parole after only 25 years instead of 50 years. That is simply unacceptable, and therefore a special session is appropriate to deal with the matter as rapidly as possible.

The special session will cost the state roughly \$40,000 per day for legislative pay, expenses, and legislative staff. We can minimize the cost to the state by finishing our work quickly and leaving Topeka as soon as possible. I support the calls of Governor Brownback and House Speaker Ray Merrick for a quick, narrowly focused special session. Some folks are indicating a desire to take advantage of the legislature being in town, and they are promoting additional legislation on a variety of subjects. However those other issues do not carry the same urgency as does the "Hard 50" issue. They can wait until January.

### The History of Kansas Special Legislative Sessions

It is interesting to take a look at past special sessions and the subject matter involved... everything from grasshopper relief to women's suffrage to school finance. Throughout the history of our state there have been 21 special legislative sessions, all of them called by the governor. Prior to a constitutional change in 1972, only the Governor could call the Legislature into a special session. With the constitutional change, special sessions may be convened by call of the Governor or by petition of two-thirds of the members of each chamber of the Legislature.

Year	Dates	Days	Issue
1874	Sept. 15 - Sept. 22	5	Grasshopper Relief
1884	March 18 - March 25	7	Foot-and-Mouth Disease



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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  
800-252-8477

Crime Victim Assistance  
800-828-9745

1886	Jan. 19 - Feb. 20	28	Judicial and Legislative Apportionment	<b>Gov- Brownback</b> 800-748-4408
1898	Dec. 21 - Jan. 9	17	Railroad Freight Rate Control	<b>Highway Road Conditions</b> 511 (in Kansas)
1903	June 24 - June 26	3	Kaw Valley Floods	
1908	Jan. 16 - Feb. 4	15	Various State Issues	
1919	June 16 - June 19	4	Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment	<b>Housing Hotline</b> 800-752-4422
1920	Jan. 5 - Jan. 27	18	Industrial Court Law	<b>KanCare Assistance</b> 866-305-5147
1923	Aug. 6 - Aug. 14	7	Veterans' Bonus Legislation	<b>Kansas Lottery</b> 800-544-9467
1928	July 19 - July 21	3	Road Amendments	
1930	Feb. 27 - March 12	11	Taxation	<b>Legislative Hotline</b> 800-432-3924
1933	Oct. 30 - Dec. 4	25	Various State Issues	
1934	March 1 - March 7	6	Mortgage Foreclosures	
1936	July 7 - July 13	6	Social Security Act	<b>Mental Health Services</b> 888-582-3759
1938	Feb. 7 - March 4	22	Welfare and Taxation	<b>School Safety Hotline</b> 877-626-8203
1958	April 21 - May 9	17	State Budget	
1964	Feb. 17 - Feb. 24	6	Legislative Apportionment	<b>Social Security</b> 800-772-1213
1966	Feb. 15 - March 9	14	Legislative Apportionment	
1987	Aug. 31 - Sept. 5	6	State Highway Plan	<b>Taxpayer Assistance</b> 785-368-8222
1989	Dec. 8 - Dec. 9	2	Property Tax	
2005	June 22 - July 6	11/12	School Finance	

During the 2005 special session the Senate adjourned after 11 days but the House took an extra legislative day to wrap up business.

### Summary of 2013 Legislation

The 2013 Legislative Session finally wrapped up on June 1, on the 99th day of the session. By statute the session is to be completed within 90 days. Never before in Kansas history had the legislature adjourned so late in the year. The legislative session was designed in the early days of statehood to accommodate the day-jobs of the legislators, many of whom were involved in agriculture. That tradition of meeting basically from January through March with a short veto or "wrap-up" session in late April or early May has continued, and those of us who are still involved in agriculture certainly appreciate that schedule.

The 2012 session adjourned on May 20, and that was the latest adjournment date on record until this year's June 1 date. That is a disturbing trend which has multiple implications. Personally, I was not able to be home to help my son plant the milo crop, so that crop went in later than we would have preferred. But even urban legislators have issues when the session drags on so long into weeks that none of us anticipated spending in Topeka. One legislator left for a week for a long-scheduled Alaskan cruise. Another missed a week for a trip to Paris, which again had been planned for months. A legislator who is an insurance agent had to leave for a few days because his major client was having open enrollment in mid-May. And still another legislator found it necessary to split his time between legislative work and his heating and cooling business.

The point is, we all have real lives outside of Topeka, and when the session stretches into weeks when we had other things planned... work obligations, vacations, family graduations, weddings, etc. it becomes a very real problem. Work and family time suffer, and it becomes much more difficult to gather up enough votes for final action passage (21 votes in the Senate; 63

**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

in the House) of any legislation. And the pressure to finish and get back to real life becomes intense enough that sometimes legislators end up voting “yes” for legislation they really don’t like, just to finally get out of town.

This trend towards later session adjournment bothers me a great deal. Maybe the trend is a manifestation of the increasingly urban composition of the legislature, but I intend to continue to exert whatever influence I can to encourage earlier adjournment, both as a gesture of good-will to the legislators and staff involved, and in the interest of passing the best possible legislation. Let’s all hope we can do a better job of sticking to the schedule during the upcoming special session!

A good [summary of 2013 legislation](#) is available on the website of the Kansas Legislative Research Division.

## 2014 Campaign

The 2014 primary election is now one year away (August 5, 2014). That time will pass quickly, and I must prepare now if I am to meet the challenge that next year’s election could bring. Early contributions will allow me to plan early so that I can mount the most effective campaign when the time comes. I would appreciate your support!

You may [contribute online here](#) or by sending a check to:

**Hineman for Kansas**  
116 S. Longhorn Rd.  
Dighton, KS 67839

Contribution limit is \$500 and is nondeductible. Contributions may be accepted from individuals, businesses, or corporations. During the special session, from September 3 to 5, contributions from businesses or corporations cannot be accepted.

### **Cowboy Logic**

“Holding a grudge is like letting someone live rent-free in your head.”

### **Quote of the week**

“I have a seven-year-old who wants a knife. To carve with. You think she’ll cut herself? I think so too. I know I did with my first knife, but that will heal and she will learn. Do you know a better way of telling someone young ‘I trust you’? ” – Gene Hill, *A Hunter’s Fireside Book*, 1972.

### **Sermon in a sentence**

Learn from the mistakes of others; you can’t live long enough to make them all yourself.

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### **Representative Don Hineman**

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

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**Newsletter Paid for by Hineman For Kansas - Derek Martin, Treasurer**