

State Representative

Don Hineman

Don's Legislative Update

February 25, 2016

Proposal for Constitutional Convention of States Defeated

This week the Kansas House of Representatives voted on HCR 5010, a resolution which called for a constitutional convention of the states. I joined 46 of my colleagues in voting no, which was enough to defeat the measure.

I am very sympathetic to the charge that the federal government often seems to be heavy-handed, out of control, and unresponsive to the citizens of the republic. However I concluded that the solution proposed by HCR 5010 is much too risky and uncertain to vote yes. There are simply too many unknowns in the process, and the potential for a runaway convention straying into topics we would not wish for it to cover is simply too great. Here are a few of my primary concerns:

1. Supreme Court Justices and prominent legal scholars on both sides of the political spectrum agree that there is no way to limit the issues that a constitutional convention could consider once it is called. These experts are convinced that states cannot limit the agenda of a constitutional convention. An important piece of history is this: the convention of 1787 that wrote the Constitution ignored its original charge, which was merely to amend the Articles of Confederation, and not to write a new document.
2. The Constitution provides no guidance about how a convention would operate, and that opens the door for special interests to exert influence on the delegates in ways we the people would not support. Will Congress play a role? It is hard for me to believe that Congress will stay out of it. What will be the rules for voting? No one knows.
3. Who will be the delegates? Who will choose them and how will they decide amongst themselves on any proposed constitutional changes? Will the rights and interests of sparsely-populated states be protected or will they be overwhelmed by the states with larger populations and possibly disproportional power in the voting process?
4. I am greatly concerned that a constitutional convention would create so much uncertainty that it could have a huge detrimental effect on the commerce of the nation. The indecision and uncertainty could paralyze individuals and businesses into economic inaction for fear of what might come out of the convention.

The concerns which led some to propose a convention of states are real. The federal government is too large and too unwieldy. The regulations it imposes on the people are oftentimes unrealistic and even counterproductive. The federal bureaucracy is too expensive and is



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unresponsive to the wishes and the needs of the people. These issues are real and are begging for solution. But after much study and soul-searching I concluded that HCR 5010 was not the proper solution.

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Turnaround in the Legislature

The Kansas legislature has now reached turnaround, that point in the legislative calendar when all bills die if they have not passed out of their house of origin, except for bills which originated in committees exempt from the deadline. In the House there are three exempt committees: Tax, Appropriations, and Federal and State Affairs. Other bills can be kept alive by being "blessed" by the Speaker by sending them to an exempt committee. Here is the status of some bills of particular interest, but with the caveat that no concept is ever completely dead in the legislature. Even though a particular bill may have died, the concept it contained may well live on, like a zombie looking for a new host.

HB 2486, establishing school bond and interest review panel	Blessed
HB 2531, repealing due process for community college instructors	Blessed
HB 2292, abolishing common core standards	Dead
HB 2174 and 2457, expanding the private school tuition tax credits	Dead
HB 2504, school district realignment (consolidation)	Dead
HB 2532, dictating curriculum (which is the duty of the state Board of Ed)	Defeated
HB 2453, audits of voting machines	Blessed

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Supreme Court Ruling on School Finance

ON February 11 the Kansas Supreme Court issued a ruling in the ongoing case regarding school finance. They determined that the present method of financing schools in Kansas is inequitable... a decision which I foresaw when the school finance formula was adopted a year ago. I voted no at the time. I discussed the ruling and its possible effects in a recent newspaper column. You can [access it on my blog HERE](#).

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Pages in the Statehouse

On Tuesday, February 16 I was joined in the Statehouse by Lanie and Cade Crouch, two seventh-graders from Leoti. It was a treat to get to

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

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

know these two students and visit with them about the workings of state government.



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Town Hall Meetings

Last Saturday I conducted town hall meetings in Dighton and Scott City with Senator Mitch Holmes. We had good turnouts at both locations and had some very good discussions. The town hall meeting in Garden City will be with several other area representatives and senators. The meetings on Monday and Tuesday are in partnership with Senator Ralph Ostmeyer. I am still working to find a time to have a town hall meeting in Leoti with Senator Larry Powell.

Saturday, February 27th

10:00 am	Finney County	St. Catherine Hospital Classroom B, Garden City
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Monday, February 29th

9:00 am	Sheridan County	Brown Scout House, Hoxie
11:00 am	Graham County	Red's Family Restaurant, Hill City
1:00 pm	Trego County	Public Library, WaKeeney
3:00 pm	Gove County	Grainfield Opera House, Grainfield
5:00 pm	Logan County	Buffalo Bill Cultural Center, Oakley

Tuesday, March 1st

9:00 am	Thomas County	Thomas County Office Complex, Colby
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This newsletter is primarily intended for the residents of the 118th District (all of Wichita, Scott, Lane, Logan, Gove, Trego, and Sheridan Counties and portions of Thomas and Graham Counties). However it is available to

anyone who finds it of interest. Please forward to your friends, or if you are not now receiving a FREE subscription to my newsletter, [click here to sign up](#).

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Cowboy Logic

If something goes without saying, let it.

Quote of the day

"The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance; it is the illusion of knowledge." — ***Stephen Hawking***

Sermon in a sentence

When you bury the hatchet don't mark the grave.

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Representative Don Hineman

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