

NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

75TH KANSAS HOUSE DISTRICT

El Dorado, Towanda, Benton, Potwin, Whitewater and all points in between...

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

News From John

Greetings from Topeka and what is almost the end of the 2006 Session. By popular request I am providing this letter that will give you a synopsis of some of the many bills we discussed and took action upon.

My intention is to reach as many as I can and offer you information that will help you understand the issues that come before us and give you an opportunity to reach me and express your views.

I am a member of the Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism, Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committees. Budget review for transportation, judicial, revenue, and retirement. I also hold a seat on the special committee on Veterans affairs.

Most of the work takes place in the committee rooms as this is where bills are introduced, debated, testimony received

from proponents and opponents.

There are 31 standing committees in the House. If you come for a visit it may look like mayhem, but you can trust me that it does work.

EVER NOTICE THAT
THE PEOPLE WHO
ARE LATE ARE MUCH
JOLLIER THAN THE
PEOPLE WHO HAVE
TO WAIT FOR
THEM?



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New Website

I've recently launched a website. It contains current issues that are being addressed in the House of Representatives, and specific bills that I am working on. My hope is that it is another tool for you to stay informed of the goings on in your state government. Take a moment to visit it on the Web:

www.johngrange.net

Busy Session in Topeka and at Home

I have had a very busy session with lots of meetings, conferences that cover a wide range of issues.

I really enjoy doing constituent work. I had a hand in a few positive events. One was the opening of the 12th street bridge out by the lake. Although not totally completed it is available for traffic and may be closed for a short time this spring to put a final topcoat on everything.

There is soon to be a guard-rail on 34th street just off Hwy 77 North of the Turnpike. Several residents, an engineer, school bus drivers and county officials called and asked for help. I talked to the State Engineer, law enforcement officials, and the Secretary of Transportation and the railing will be installed shortly.

The eminent domain issue (SB 323) has a split audience. Some say the taking of private property by a govern-

ment entity to sell to another private entity is wrong. I agree.

Current law allows the same government to take private property for projects of public benefit such as new roads, a lake, right of ways for utility lines.

I support current law but would not support expanding government's ability to seize property from private citizens and selling it to private developers.

'I place economy among the first and most important virtues, and public debt as the greatest of dangers to be feared. To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. If we run into such debts, we must be taxed in our meat and drink, in our necessities and in our comforts, in our labor and in our amusements. If we can prevent the government from wasting the labor of the people, under the pretense of caring for them, they will be happy.'

-Thomas Jefferson

EDUCATION FUNDING



This issue will be with us forever. How much is enough? I think as long as the courts get so heavily involved it will still be a much debated issue. The current law will give the schools the \$259 million from last year and increase it **another \$75 million** for this year. You have to ask yourself what type of education do we want? Do we really have a problem? And what else are you willing to give up to increase the level of funding

through the roof? Do you ever go to your school board meeting? Do you know your school board members? Before we keep asking for more we should take a hard look at where the current dollars go.

Do I think some teachers are under paid?

Do I think there are some weaker teachers that need additional help to improve their skills?

Do I think we all should pay

for these improvements?

Do I think we could cut spending elsewhere to get the money?

My answer is yes to all.

I am not encouraged to agree to spend money that we have today, especially if the forecast is that we will go in the hole in a couple of years.

What do you think? I would really appreciate hearing your opinions on this.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION

SB 461 the workmen's compensation bill that will change the way compensation is paid for work related injuries. Some call this the "disposable workers bill" in that it will allow for discharge of employees because of economic reasons. This term is not well defined and should be. I think we should say "economic downturn". This is closer to the true intent. The main

issue is how we treat pre-existing conditions. I think an employer, such as myself should be responsible for the worker's injured on the job. Currently the employers insurance will pay for the medical costs of a work place injury, the rehabilitation, some portion of lost wages while recuperating, and in some case a disability payment if you are in fact disabled.

What I am not in favor of is paying for that old football injury from high school or the water skiing accident over the weekend.

This bill has encouraged debate between the worker's side and employer's side. Attorneys that pay for the ads that encourage lawsuits for workplace injury are taking the lead. Remember they get

paid only if you get paid. One should always check with an attorney to make sure they are getting treated fairly.

Insurance companies are mostly neutral, since they mainly collect premiums and pay claims. Some limits set 20 years ago on disability payments are too low and I will work to increase them. **I do support the existing bill.**

CONCEALED CARRY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION

SB 418 License to carry concealed handguns. Enacts the Personal and Family Protection Act that beginning January 1, 2007. This somewhat controversial bill has been an issue for years and looks like there may be some movement to get it passed this year. There are of course two sides to the issue and some concerns as to the costs to implement. Some restrictions are likely to prevent known fel-

ons or otherwise undesirable individuals from obtaining a license. I don't think they have a license now. One person said there would be a huge costs to install metal detectors to check for concealed handguns. I would ask "If you do not have metal detectors now to check for illegal handguns, why would you want to check for legally carried ones?" **I will vote yes.**

SB 481 concerns school districts and their voluntary consolidation efforts. I am a proponent for this bill in that it guarantees consolidating school districts to maintain their current level of funding for their general fund, bond and interest, and LOB for a period of 3 years. This is a local control issue and if consolidation is to be effective local control must decide. **I will support this.**

IT'S AN OLD
LESSON OF
ECONOMICS:
YOU GET MORE
OF WHAT YOU
SUBSIDIZE.
CONCESSIONS
GIVE BIRTH TO
MORE
CONCESSIONS.

WWW.JOHNGRANGE.NET

HB 2615 states that the children of illegal workers would be able to attend a Regents Institution while paying in- state tuition, if they have attended a Kansas high school for 3 years. Is this a fair policy?

Should persons be restricted from negative and hateful demonstrating at the funerals of our deceased soldiers?

Should the state allow embryonic stem cell research? Should the state promote adult stem cell research?

Should local governments be allowed to take private land to be sold to other private developers just for the benefit of receiving additional tax payments? (eminent domain)

Education funding is always a hot topic in the legislature. How much money do you think is needed to properly educate a child from Kindergarten through 12th grade? What is the source of this money?

Should high school students, who have completed the Board of Regents requirements, be allowed to graduate from high school one year early? If so, should these students receive a \$1,000 bonus for their accomplishment.

Do you think you tax dollars are spent wisely? What do you consider as proper spending?

What are your thoughts on concealed carry of handguns?

Please add your own comments and recommendations.

Please mail your answers to Rep. John Grange at State Capital Room 531-N, Topeka, KS 66612 or 1115 Rim Rock Road, El Dorado, Kansas 67042. Email these responses or other comments to grange@house.state.ks.us or johnng@carlisleinc.net

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Did You Know?

- The Kansas Capitol building was under construction from 1866 through 1903.
- The east wing of the Kansas Capitol was built first, the west wing second, and the wings were connected by the dome in 1903.



Ad Astra statue

- The statue on top of the Capitol, *Ad Astra*, depicts a Kansa warrior pointing a bow toward the North Star and weighs 4,420 pounds and is 22 feet 2 inches tall.

INTERN'S CORNER

As a junior in college I never thought I would have the opportunity to intern at the state capital. Starting on the second month of my internship here at the capital I have already learned so much in a short time. I think it's impossible to completely understand the inner workings of this system until you are right there in the middle of it, and even then there is really a lot to take in. In my time here, I have gotten the opportunity to work on and experience many things. Contacting constituents, doing research, attending committee meetings and hearings, working

on position papers and this newsletter are just a few of the things I have done. While politics may sometimes have a boring reputation, I have found this experience to be anything but that. It has been great working with Representative Grange as well as many others here at the capital. This has been a wonderful opportunity for me to meet many people not only from El Dorado and the surrounding area, but also from all over Kansas.

-Jessie Connell, 2006 Legislative Intern



Jessie Connell of El Dorado is a junior majoring in Psychology and Family Counseling at Kansas State University.