

From the Dome to Home

Kansas House of Representatives

2/26/2021

House Appropriations, Chairman

Reamortization of KPERS

When Governor Laura Kelly introduced her budget to the Legislature in early January, the cornerstone of her budget is the reamortization of the unfunded liability for the Kansas Public Employees Retirement system (KPERS). She had introduced this notion twice before and it was rejected by the legislature. Since Governor Kelly's budget is contingent on refinancing the unfunded liability, we in the

refinance does nothing but perpetuate an ongoing problem. We have made great strides in recent years in addressing the needs for KPERS and this proposal does nothing but add an additional \$7.4 billion onto the taxpayers of Kansas by refinancing for an additional fifteen years.

Even the board of directors, who has the authority to

"Nothing is IMPOSSIBLE. The word itself says I'M POSSIBLE"

Audrey Hepburn

House Appropriations Committee have been dissecting all parts of the Governor's budget in order to balance without this particular provision. I have consistently maintained a platform of being fiscally conservative, especially in my role as House Appropriations Chairman. However, the refinance of the unfunded liability does nothing but increase our debt load and it fails to fund our pension system and only dismisses the promises that we have made. The plan to

refinance if they choose to do so, has publicly spoke against the Governor's proposal to refinance KPERS.

Late last week, House Bill 2405 was introduced for the reamortization of KPERS in the House Appropriations Committee and this bill has been referred to the House Insurance and Pensions Committee. I am certain that even if this bill would be passed out of committee, it will suffer the same fate as before and fail on the House floor.

Appropriations Committee

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This week the House Appropriations Committee continued with numerous budget recommendations from the budget committees. We are nearing the end of this process and should be constructing our budget around the middle of March after we return from the midway point of the session, referenced as "Turnaround." One of the more notable budget committee recommendations came from the budget of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The recommendation from the committee is that if no bill passes regarding Medicaid Expansion then the \$19 million that the Governor had proposed in her budget for Medicaid Expansion and directs that money to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). One of the bills we passed out of committee was House Bill 2214, which transfers land from the Department of Corrections to the city of Beloit, Kansas.



Bills Passed the House

On Tuesday, February 23, the Kansas House of Representatives debated and voted on five bills, all of these bills passed Wednesday and are on their way to the Kansas State Senate.

One of those bills that we debated and voted on is House Bill 2237, which would extend the sunset on the Rural Opportunity Zones (ROZ). When ROZ was first enacted the program was to sunset after the tax year of 2021. This bill extends the sunset to 2023. The bill also extends the annual reporting requirements to the House and Senate Taxation Committees which would include how many are participating in the program. In the current fiscal year, the budget for ROZ is \$950,000, all from the Economic

Development Initiatives Fund which is funded by the Kansas Lottery money. This money is used to fund the obligations of the student loan forgiveness component of the ROZ program and the bill continues these obligations through fiscal year 2026. This bill passed the House, 107-16.

On Thursday, we debated House Bill 2093, which increases the criminal penalty for fleeing or eluding a police officer when operating a stolen vehicle. This bill passed the House, 124-0. I voted "yes" on both bills.

Anytime that you would like to participate and listen to the developments of committee hearings or discussion on the

House floor, you can tune in by listening to the audio footage at www.kslegislature.org.

As always, if you have any concerns, feel free to contact me (785) 296-7672, follow on twitter at @waymaster4house, or email me at

troy.waymaster@house.ks.gov.

Please contact me regarding any issues and legislation that we are discussing during session.

It is a distinct honor to serve as your representative for the 109th Kansas House District and the state of Kansas. Please contact me with your thoughts, concerns, and questions. I always appreciate hearing from the residents of the 109th House District and others from the state of Kansas, as well.

Representative Troy L. Waymaster represents the 109th Kansas House District.

Paid for by Troy L. Waymaster for Kansas House, James Malone, Treasurer.

