

**LEGISLATIVE E-REPORT  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS**

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**2012 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS E-REPORT #22 Final**  
Paul Johnson – June 15, 2012

**REDISTRICTING RESET**

The Kansas Legislature spent months battling over maps to redistrict the Congressional and legislative districts. Alas no compromise could be reached. Kansas became the only state in the country unable to accomplish this task. Three federal judges held two days of hearings and produced new maps in a week. The judges were not worried about protecting incumbents. The judges held to a much stricter standard of population deviation between districts. The judges were more concerned with drawing more contiguous districts that were more compact and recognizing a community of interest. These new maps have shaken up the political landscape in Topeka. Time will tell what these new districts will do to the balance of power in the state?

The Kansas House had settled on a map of 125 districts that had no incumbents facing one another. Three House members were retiring so those districts were moved to Johnson County to account for that population growth over the last decade. In fact, this map received fairly strong bipartisan support in the House. This House map allowed for a five percent variance in population count so some districts were five percent over and some five percent under – thus an overall 10% variance. The federal judges could not accept this population variance and lowered the variance to 2%. The new House map from the federal court put 25 incumbents into districts facing another possible incumbent. This new map drew 25 districts that had no incumbents. Some existing House members moved to have a residence in one of those 'non-incumbent' districts. Sixteen members of the House announced their retirement including the Speaker of the House Mike O'Neal. State Senator Ray Merrick decided to return to the House in a district with no incumbent. He has no opponent in the primary or the general and he has announced his intention to become the next Speaker of the House.

The Kansas Senate map that passed narrowly – 22 to 18 – had just two incumbent Senators in the same district. The Kansas Senate map seemed more favorable to certain moderates by moving certain conservative challengers out of the moderate's district. The federal judges drew a map that had four Senate districts with two incumbents and four Senate districts with no incumbent. Three Senators retired so there will be two Senate races with incumbents squaring off.

(Senate district #15 with Sen. Dwayne Umbarger of Thayer versus Sen. Jeff King from Independence & Senate district #40 with Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer from Grinnell versus Sen. Allen Schmidt from Hays.) There are 6 races where House members are challenging incumbent Senators. The battle between the moderates and conservatives will be fought out in several Senate races this year. The federal judges drew a Congressional map that moved Riley County (Manhattan) into the big 1<sup>st</sup> District. The federal judges released their maps on the evening of Thursday June 7. The filing deadline for candidates was not changed from Monday - June 11 at noon. This gave the political parties four days to line up candidates for 25 new House districts and 4 new Senate districts. When the filings were completed, 100 candidates had filed for the 40 Senate districts and 250 candidates filed for the 125 House districts. As usual there are around 20 House races with no opposition. In fact, three new House candidates have no opposition and won their district by just paying the filing fee. One Senator in district 16 – Ty Masterson – has no opponent in his Senate race. The August 7 primary is just 7 weeks away. There will be some spirited campaigning especially in those House races of incumbent versus incumbent or those Senate primaries of Senate incumbents and House challengers. Kansas has never term limited its House or Senate members as many states have but these new redistricting maps forced substantive changes never before seen in Kansas. Will this experience motivate Kansas' lawmakers to alter our redistricting process? (To view the new maps: [http://redistricting.ks.gov/Plans/district\\_court.html](http://redistricting.ks.gov/Plans/district_court.html))

### **THE FUTURE OF THE STATE BUDGET**

The FY 2013 Kansas budget (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013) is finally finished. Now the scramble begins to assemble a FY 2014 Kansas budget that can balance. The mega-tax bill signed by the Governor had little impact on the 2013 budget but for 2014 the impact is far greater. Lost tax revenue for 2013 was just \$231 million but for 2014 the lost tax revenue jumps to \$802 million. FY 2013 budget has an ending balance of \$509 million in the black while the FY 2014 budget has an ending balance in the red of \$242 million. The Governor is already looking for budget cuts to handle this imbalance. The Governor vetoed \$800,000 for the Local Environmental Protection Program. (This is the only state/county program that tests private water wells and sewer systems.) The Governor reduced from \$1.1 million to \$600,000 funding for the Wichita Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project funding. (This project stores treated river water in the Equus Beds aquifer for future water needs.) The court case over school funding has begun and that may play into more funding for public schools directed by the Kansas Supreme Court. The Medicaid managed care plan known as KanCare may not begin by January 1, 2013 so the assumed savings will not materialize. An economic renaissance for Kansas will have to happen soon to offset the loss of income tax revenues. The \$242 million state budget deficit in 2014 jumps to

\$914 million in 2015 and to \$2.4 Billion by 2018. Good luck to the new Kansas Legislature in 2013 to solve these budgetary and revenue issues!

## **RESOURCES**

### **KANSAS LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT**

Supplement II to Preliminary Summary of Legislation: 2012 Kansas Legislature was completed on June 3. This supplement contains summaries of selected bills from May 20 through adjournment. This supplement contains information on water bills, land-spreading of 'fracking wastes', the state budget, KPERS omnibus bill and the mega-tax bill – Senate Sub. for HB 2117. The first summary came out on April 29 while Supplement 1 came out on May 2. These three publications cover all of the major legislation passed by the 2012 Kansas Legislature.

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/Summaries.htm>

### **KANSAS HEALTH INSTITUTE (KHI)**

KHI will have the latest reporting on the progress of KanCare. Check KHI's recent reporting on the problems with managed care plans in Kentucky. They will also have detailed reporting on the United States Supreme Court's decision on the President's 'Affordable Care Act' when that decision is released this month. KHI is the best source of reporting on medical and social service issues in Kansas.

<http://www.khi.org/>

### **CITIZEN UTILITY RATEPAYER BOARD (CURB)**

CURB intervenes in utility rate increase cases for residential and small business customers before the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC). There are major rate requests by the large electric and natural gas companies now before the KCC. You can sign up for the newsletter from CURB that gives you detailed background information on Westar, KCP&L and Kansas Gas Service rate requests being heard by the KCC. CURB also tracks legislation before the Kansas Legislature to determine its impact on residential and small business customers.

<http://curb.kansas.gov/>