

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Representative Mike Burgess, Chair, at 3:30 p.m., February 17, 2011 in Room 546-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Rocky Fund - Excused
Representative Kay Wolf - Excused

Committee staff present:

Julian Efird, Legislative Research
Iraida Orr, Legislative Research
Katherine McBride, Revisor of Statutes
Renae Jefferies, Revisor of Statutes
Linda Herrick, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Jane Carter, Executive Director, Kansas Organization of State Employees
Dennis Taylor, Secretary of Administration

Others attending:

(see attached list)

Chair Burgess asked Katherine McBride to give a briefing on **HB 2221 - Relating to the employee award program**. Ms. McBride noted that though the bill presented appeared to strike and add a considerable amount of language, the only major substantive changes were to subsection (g) of section 1, page 2. This change was necessary because the Kansas savings incentives account or fund does not currently exist.

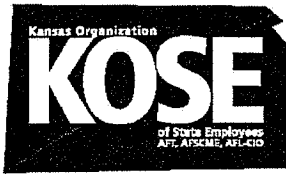
The Chair asked for any proponents of the bill. Jane Carter, Executive Director of the Kansas Organization of State Employees, provided testimony (Attachment 1). Ms. Carter felt an employee incentive program would be very beneficial but asked if some of the ideas in the 2010 SB 294 could be incorporated. Dennis Taylor, Secretary of Administration, was present to answer questions.

Chair Burgess noted this bill will be revisited on Monday after the above referenced Senate Bill's language has been considered.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

[illegible]



A New Day... A Better Way... For State Employees

Testimony before the
Government Efficiency and Fiscal Oversight Committee
On
HB 2221 – Relating to the Employee Incentive Program
By
Jane Carter, Executive Director
Kansas Organization of State Employees
February 17, 2011

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am here today to speak on behalf of the 11,000 executive branch employees represented by the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE) who support an employee incentive program. As the largest certified, State recognized employee organization for state employees in the executive branch, we appreciate this opportunity to address issues that affect our members. KOSE supports HB 2221; however, we would like to present a few suggestions to the Committee.

We appreciate the committee's continued work on this bill. KOSE has stated time and again that if you want to find waste in state government, you have to ask an employee. Much like other states and other governmental bodies, an employee reward program can be very beneficial.

We would respectfully request that this Committee consider incorporating some of the ideas put forward in SB 294 from the 2010 Legislative Session, that included not only the state employee suggestion program with incentive funding but also protections for the employees who do come forward. These changes to HB 2221 will make it far more likely that the program will be successful in implementation.

In Kansas we have been told again and again that we must cut the waste from our state agencies. There is no better time for us to encourage state employees to identify waste and inefficiencies than the present. However, in doing so, we must recognize the hardship any employee would confront having to possibly go against a supervisor—someone who can discipline, make a performance evaluation, or fire an employee.

According to the National Whistleblowers Center,¹ seventeen states have already strengthened their whistleblower protections beyond the piecemeal laws of Kansas. These strengthened protections encourage state employees to come forward with allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse in their state government free from any reprisal or threat of reprisal.

This Legislature must encourage state employees to come forward and tell their stories without fear of reprisal or the threat of reprisal. We would strongly recommend that the Committee develop language that allows for a year of protection. Employees should be able to speak directly with the Attorney General's Office.

We urge the Committee to support employees coming forward to root out waste, fraud, or any other inefficiency in state government.

¹ National Whistleblower Center: Statutes per state:

http://www.whistleblowers.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=742&Itemid=161