

**House Committee on Appropriations
Oral Proponent Testimony in Support of:
HB 2315 – Limitation on Meeting Days of the Legislative Session
Thursday, January 28, 2016**

I appear before you today as a proponent of HB 2513, a bill limiting our legislative sessions in odd numbered years to 60-days.

- ❖ The writers of our State Constitution always intended Kansas to have a part-time legislature where any able-bodied resident of the state could serve. The lengths of our sessions have come to occupy much of the first five months of the year. Few ordinary citizens, whether farmers, employees of business, teachers or business people, can afford the time, loss of income or negative career impact to be significantly absent almost half of the year. Shorter sessions will allow the Legislature to attract concerned, active, and qualified citizens with a sense of civic duty. Kansas should keep a citizen's legislature open to all and can help do so by limiting its sessions through this change in the state law.
- ❖ Furthermore, after a hundred and fifty-five years of existence, does Kansas really need the long 90-day Legislative sessions? Do that many of our laws become antiquated every year? Let's look at the facts; in the last three Legislative sessions and including the first year of this current session, the numbers of bills that have had final action represent only a small percentage of overall introductions:
 - 2009 - 2010: 22.9%
 - 2011 - 2012: 22.9%
 - 2013 – 2014: 22.5%
 - 2015: 14.07%
- ❖ A 60-day limit on our work would promote prioritizing and focusing on the real issues and needs of Kansas, and allow for the completion of our duties in an efficient and cost-effective manner. As a Nevada study noted in a report on limiting their legislative session:

“Deadlines encourage self-discipline. Through their use the flow of legislative work can be regulated and legislators can function in a deliberate and responsible manner.”
- ❖ In our own history, Kansas has effectively managed the business of the people without lengthy Legislative sessions. Prior to the mid-1970's the Kansas Legislative session routinely met for only 40-60 days, including one great example in 1966, when the legislature had a total of 35 days in session.

- ❖ Is a shorter session feasible? From research done by the NCSL and the Kansas Legislative Research Department, there are 17 states that currently meet for less time than Kansas and 11 who meet for more [an additional nine larger states meet full time], while another 12 are more or less equal to our legislative length.
 - Kansas has a population of 2.8 million with a 90-day Legislative Session.
 - Arkansas with a population of 2.96 million, operates with 60-day Legislature
 - Utah with a population of 2.94 million, operates with 45-day Legislature
 - While an even a larger state like Florida, population 19.9 million has a 60-day session.
 - Indiana, population 6.6 million, had no constitutional limit to their sessions and has passed legislation to limit sessions to 61-days in odd years, and 30-days in even years.
- ❖ Finally, the current cost to the Kansas Taxpayers is \$66,000 per day while the Legislature is in session. If we conducted our work in the most efficient and fiscally sound manner over 60 days, we could save Kansas Taxpayers \$1,980,000.
- ❖ I believe that if this Legislature imposes a reasonable time table on itself, it will benefit the state of Kansas by keeping the Legislature focused on the people's business that truly matters.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 2315.

Marvin KleeB
Kansas Representative
48th District