

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Edmonds at 1:30 P.M. on January 26, 2006 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

- Representative Ray Cox- excused
- Representative Kenny Wilk- excused

Committee staff present except:

- Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes Office - excused

Conferees:

- Athena Andaya, Legislative Research Department
- Rep. Edward O'Malley, Jr.

Others attending:

- See attached list.

Chairman Edmonds opened the floor for bill introductions and introduced Representative Bob Bethell who requested introduction of four bills; (1) opening the nurse practice act and removes the graduate level of practice for a nurse, (2) finger printing professional nurses, practical nurses and criminal history, (3) finger printing of mental health technicians and criminal history, (4) and opens the statute that allows the board of nursing to charge fees and changes the caps.

With no objections, those four bill were accepted for introduction.

Representative Huebert requested a resolution in support of the Federal marriage amendment.

With no objections this is accepted for introduction.

Chairman Edmonds requested an update of **HB 2076** having to do with Miki's law.

With no objections, that bill was accepted for introduction.

Chairman Edmonds also requested a bill known as the flavored malt beverage act.

With no objections, that bill was accepted for introduction.

Athena Andaya, Legislative Research Department, addressed the committee providing a response to questions asked by the committee regarding **SB 62**. (Attachment 1)

Representative Edward O'Malley briefed the committee on **HB 2559** - Campaign finance amendments relating to independent expenditures, electioneering communications, certain reporting requirements and corrupt political advertising. Representative O'Malley related that this bill is simply about disclosure. Kansans should have the right to know who are funding campaigns in this state. Under current law citizens are often left in the dark when it comes to the financing of campaign efforts. (Attachment 2) Also presented for Committee review were charts showing contributions reported prior to the primary and general elections, (Attachment 3) the number of contributions plus total dollar amount for the last eleven days prior to an election, (Attachment 4) and the PAC Independent Expenditure Activity. (Attachment 5) Also distributed for Committee review were several editorials regarding campaign contributions. (Attachment 6)

With no further business before the committee, Chairman Edmonds adjourned the meeting.

**Answers to Questions Presented by
Members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
SB 62 - Grandparents as Caregivers**

1. Do grandparents have standing by virtue of participating in the program? What impact would the program have if parents have named someone other than grandparents as guardians in the event of the parents' deaths?

The legislation would provide no legal standing for the grandparents on its own merits. It only allows for the provision of assistance to grandparents who meet the criteria.

2. Who will decide between maternal and paternal grandparents if there is a conflict?

The legislation does not address this circumstance. The court awarding custody or guardianship would decide between competing applicants.

3. Is the \$200 obtained through this program income for tax purposes? What about for purposes of obtaining other benefits such as food stamps, etc?

As other assistance benefits such as TANF are not viewed for tax purposes, it is unlikely this would be either. The benefits would be countable as income in the Food Stamp program but would have only a slight impact on benefits. It would also be exempt in determining other program benefits but may be countable in the SSI program.

4. What benefits can grandparents rearing grandchildren qualify for today without this bill? What amount would they be paid as foster parents?

Grandparents can currently access benefits such as medical, Food Stamps and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). See the attached chart.

5. Does a grandparent's health factor into a determination of fitness? Is there a threshold? If so, who will decide what is appropriate?

This is not addressed in the bill. The court may inquire into the fitness of the petitioner including health when deciding legal custody or guardianship.

6. Why did the program remove the TANF piece of the original legislation?

TANF has been fully obligated for other uses so funding of this program is not available. The high TANF funding balances in previous years are no longer available. Use of federal funds also carries with it other requirements such as cooperation with child support enforcement.

7. Are background checks required?

No. The bill does not address a requirement for background checks. As noted above, the court is involved in approving legal custody or guardianship for the child and would likely address this issue through that process.

8. Why set the minimum age at 50 years old?

To keep the fiscal note within proposed funding. Some research indicates the median age of

grand parents raising grand children is 50.

9. Eligibility for this program is 100% (reduced from 130%) of poverty level. What are the percentages required to qualify for other programs such as food stamps or Health Wave?

Income limits for selected programs:

TANF - 30% FPL

Medicaid for Children Ages 6-18 - 100% FPL

Food Stamps/Low Income Energy Assistance - 130% FPL

Medicaid for Children Ages 1-5 - 133% FPL

Medicaid for Children Under Age 1 and Pregnant Women - 150% FPL

HealthWave - 200% FPL

Child Care Assistance - 185% FPL

10. What is the cost of a child in foster care? Why doesn't the fiscal note take into consideration the savings, including savings in administrative costs, by placing a child with grandparents?

The average monthly cost per foster child in FY 06 is \$1,935.

When a foster child who would otherwise be placed with strangers is placed with grandparents, the grandparents may be licensed and paid as foster parents. When this happens there is no savings. When the grandparent chooses not to be licensed, they are not paid as foster parents and the cost of foster care maintenance is reduced to the cost of food stamps, medical card and TANF. The administrative costs and responsibilities of foster care are not diminished when a foster child is placed with relatives.

How does the current foster care program fit with this bill?

The grandparents as care givers program created by SB 62 is not connected to the foster care program but would provide financial support for families who are willing and able to care for their own children. The foster care program serves families when the children are or are likely to be children in need of care.

11. What effect does this bill have on TANF?

Grandparents who take advantage of the new program will not access TANF benefits. However, the proposed program would not significantly reduce the demand for TANF overall. The state could claim the state funds spent in this program toward the State's Maintenance of Effort requirement under the TANF block grant.

**KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO RELATIVE CAREGIVERS**

May 1, 2005

A relative caregiver who cares for a child in the custody of SRS has the choice of applying for Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF) or becoming a foster care provider. While the Foster Care benefit is larger than the TAF benefit, the caregiver must fulfill additional requirements. If the child is not in the custody of SRS, the relative would only be able to apply for TAF. The chart below compares the eligibility criteria of these programs to allow a relative caregiver to make an informed choice:

1-3

Eligibility Criteria	Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF)	Relative Foster Care (cares only for relatives)	Licensed Foster Care (cares for both relatives and non-relatives)
Child's Status	Must live with a relative or legal guardian/custodian. Relative is not required to have legal custody.	Must be in the custody of the Secretary of SRS and placed with a relative	Must be in the custody of the Secretary of SRS
Income Limit*	Child's monthly unearned income must be less than \$175	None	None
Resource/Asset Limit*	Child's assets (savings, checking account, property in child's name) must be less than \$2,000	None	None
Must cooperate with SRS Child Support Enforcement (CSE)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must pass home inspection	No	Yes, but does not require licensing.	Yes
Must pass KBI check	No, unless child is in custody	Yes	Yes
Must pass check of Child Abuse/Neglect Registry	No, unless child is in custody	Yes	Yes
Must complete training	No	No	Yes
Typical cash payment for one child	\$175	Varies regionally, between \$150 and \$540	\$570
Medical Assistance provided for child	Yes	Yes	Yes
Child Care Assistance provided (if caregiver is employed)*	If income is under 185% poverty level. Only child's income is considered. Must cooperate with CSE.	If income under 185% poverty level. Both adult's and child's income. Must cooperate with CSE.	Child care assistance available through the foster care program
Food Assistance provided	If household's income under 130% of poverty and assets less than \$2,000.	If household's income under 130% of poverty and assets less than \$2,000	If household's income under 130% of poverty and assets under \$2,000

*If caregivers also request TAF cash assistance for themselves, the adult's finances must also be considered in determining eligibility for the family.

** If minor child's parent is in the home, parent income and resources must be considered in determining eligibility.

Poverty Guidelines
May 1, 2005

1-4

Selected Kansas SRS Services	Percent of 2005 Federal Poverty Level	Annual Income Guidelines for 1 to 5 Member Households				
		HH 1	HH 2	HH 3	HH 4	HH 5
TAF & GA-Cash & Medical	30%	\$ 2,874	\$ 3,878	\$ 4,883	\$ 5,888	\$ 6,893
Elderly/Disabled Persons on SSI-Medical	72%	6,948	10,428	N/A	N/A	N/A
Children Ages 6-18 - Medicaid/Waivers	100%	9,570	12,830	16,090	19,350	22,610
	105%	10,048	13,471	16,814	20,317	23,740
	110%	10,527	14,113	17,699	21,285	24,871
	115%	11,005	14,754	18,503	22,252	26,001
	120%	11,484	15,396	19,308	23,220	27,132
	125%	11,962	16,037	20,112	24,187	28,262
Food Assistance/Energy Assistance	130%	12,441	16,679	20,917	25,155	29,393
Children Age 1-5 - Medicaid	133%	12,728	17,064	21,400	25,736	30,071
	135%	12,919	17,320	21,721	26,122	30,523
	140%	13,398	17,962	22,526	27,090	31,654
	145%	13,876	18,603	23,330	28,057	32,784
Pregnant Women & Infants - Medicaid	150%	14,355	19,245	24,135	29,025	33,915
	155%	14,833	19,886	24,939	29,992	35,045
	160%	15,312	20,528	25,744	30,960	36,176
	165%	15,790	21,169	26,548	31,927	37,306
	170%	16,269	21,811	27,353	32,895	38,437
	175%	16,747	22,452	28,157	33,862	39,567
	180%	17,226	23,094	28,962	34,830	40,698
Child Care Subsidy	185%	17,704	23,735	29,766	35,797	41,828
	190%	18,183	24,377	30,571	36,765	42,959
	195%	18,661	25,018	31,375	37,732	44,089
Children's Health Insurance Program	200%	19,140	25,660	32,180	38,700	45,220

Information contained in this chart is intended to be general and is subject to change.
 For specific eligibility requirements, please check with the nearest Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services Office.

**Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Eligibility and Payment Options for Grandparents as Caregivers
FY 2006 Direct Services [1]**

Minimum Grandparent Age	Monthly Payment	Grandparent Income Limit [2]					
		80% FPL	90% FPL	100% FPL	110% FPL	120% FPL	130% FPL
65	\$200	\$990,000	\$1,148,400	\$1,309,200	\$1,424,400	\$1,537,200	\$1,650,000
	250	1,319,400	1,517,400	1,718,400	1,862,400	2,003,400	2,144,400
	300	1,648,800	1,886,400	2,127,600	2,300,400	2,469,600	2,638,800
	350	1,978,200	2,255,400	2,536,800	2,738,400	2,935,800	3,133,200
	400	2,307,600	2,624,400	2,946,000	3,176,400	3,402,000	3,627,600
	410	2,373,480	2,698,200	3,027,840	3,264,000	3,495,240	3,726,480
60	\$200	\$1,649,280	\$1,915,680	\$2,182,080	\$2,371,680	\$2,561,280	\$2,748,480
	250	2,206,080	2,539,080	2,872,080	3,109,080	3,346,080	3,580,080
	300	2,762,880	3,162,480	3,562,080	3,846,480	4,130,880	4,411,680
	350	3,319,680	3,785,880	4,252,080	4,583,880	4,915,680	5,243,280
	400	3,876,480	4,409,280	4,942,080	5,321,280	5,700,480	6,074,880
	410	3,987,840	4,533,960	5,080,080	5,468,760	5,857,440	6,241,200
55	\$200	\$2,315,760	\$2,690,160	\$3,064,560	\$3,326,160	\$3,590,160	\$3,854,160
	250	3,122,760	3,590,760	4,058,760	4,385,760	4,715,760	5,045,760
	300	3,929,760	4,491,360	5,052,960	5,445,360	5,841,360	6,237,360
	350	4,736,760	5,391,960	6,047,160	6,504,960	6,966,960	7,428,960
	400	5,543,760	6,292,560	7,041,360	7,564,560	8,092,560	8,620,560
	410	5,705,160	6,472,680	7,240,200	7,776,480	8,317,680	8,858,880
50	\$200	\$2,738,160	\$3,177,360	\$3,616,560	\$3,926,160	\$4,235,760	\$4,545,360
	250	3,738,960	4,287,960	4,836,960	5,223,960	5,610,960	5,997,960
	300	4,739,760	5,398,560	6,057,360	6,521,760	6,986,160	7,450,560
	350	5,740,560	6,509,160	7,277,760	7,819,560	8,361,360	8,903,160
	400	6,741,360	7,619,760	8,498,160	9,117,360	9,736,560	10,355,760
	410	6,941,520	7,841,880	8,742,240	9,376,920	10,011,600	10,646,280
45	\$200	\$3,155,760	\$3,659,760	\$4,163,760	\$4,518,960	\$4,876,560	\$5,231,760
	250	4,344,960	4,974,960	5,604,960	6,048,960	6,495,960	6,939,960
	300	5,534,160	6,290,160	7,046,160	7,578,960	8,115,360	8,648,160
	350	6,723,360	7,605,360	8,487,360	9,108,960	9,734,760	10,356,360
	400	7,912,560	8,920,560	9,928,560	10,638,960	11,354,160	12,064,560
	410	8,150,400	9,183,600	10,216,800	10,944,960	11,678,040	12,406,200

- The amounts above include only the monthly payments per child. Other costs included in 2005 Senate Bill No. 62, such as training, support services, counseling, staffing, and automation, are excluded.
- The annual income for one and two person households under the 2005 federal poverty guidelines follow. The approximate income limit for Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF) is 30% of the federal poverty level.

	30% FPL	80% FPL	90% FPL	100% FPL	110% FPL	120% FPL	130% FPL
1 person	\$2,871	\$7,656	\$8,613	\$9,570	\$10,527	\$11,484	\$12,441
2 persons	\$3,849	\$10,264	\$11,547	\$12,830	\$14,113	\$15,396	\$16,679

**Eligibility and Payment Options for Grandparents as Caregivers
Total Monthly Cases Affected by Higher Payments**

Minimum Grandparent Age	Monthly Payment	Grandparent Income Limit					
		80% FPL	90% FPL	100% FPL	110% FPL	120% FPL	130% FPL
65	200	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
	250	333	373	413	441	470	498
	300						
	350	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
	400	549	615	682	730	777	824
410							
60	200	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
	250	564	631	697	744	791	838
	300						
	350	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
	400	928	1,039	1,150	1,229	1,308	1,386
410							
55	200	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
	250	818	912	1,005	1,071	1,136	1,202
	300						
	350	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
	400	1,345	1,501	1,657	1,766	1,876	1,986
410							
50	200	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
	250	1,015	1,125	1,234	1,312	1,389	1,466
	300						
	350	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
	400	1,668	1,851	2,034	2,163	2,292	2,421
410							
45	200	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
	250	1,209	1,335	1,461	1,550	1,639	1,727
	300						
	350	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children	Children
	400	1,982	2,192	2,402	2,550	2,699	2,847
410							



REP. EDWARD J. O'MALLEY JR.
STATE OF KANSAS, 24TH DISTRICT

Briefing for the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
January 26, 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to brief you on House Bill 2559, the bipartisan campaign finance reform bill.

This bill is simply about disclosure. Kansans should have the right to know who are funding campaigns in this state. Unfortunately, under current law citizens are often left in the dark when it comes to the financing of campaign efforts.

Last year we reaffirmed our commitment to open government by renewing and expanding the Open Records Act. Creating a more "open" process for campaign activity is equally, if not more, important.

Description of House Bill 2559:

Section 1 requires any person who makes an "electioneering communication" or "issue ad" within 30 days before a primary election or 60 days before a general election to file a report disclosing the name of the candidate mentioned in the communication, the name and address of each person who contributes more than \$50 for the communication, and the name and address of the vendor(s) paid more than \$50 for the communication. These reports would be filed on the due date for all other campaign finance reports.

Section 2 requires a PAC to report any independent expenditure it makes during the last 11 days before an election in excess of \$300 on or before the close of the second business day following the day the expenditure is made or contracted to be made.

Section 3 requires treasurers for state and local candidates to file a report of any contributions received by the campaign in the last 11 days before an election in the amount of \$300 or more before the close of the second business day following the day the contribution is received with the Secretary of State or county election officer.

(over)

Section 4 requires a political action committee to provide more detailed information on expenditures made by the committee that advocate the election or defeat of a state or local candidate.

Section 5 requires the identification of who "paid for" or "sponsored" any paid matter by telephonic means that advocates the election or defeat of a candidate for state or local office.

**\$300 PLUS CONTRIBUTIONS REPORTED PRIOR TO THE
PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 7-23-04/8-3-04	192	\$ 97,533
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 10-22-04/11-2-04	234	\$133,533

SENATE	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 7-23-04/8-3-04	307	\$236,285
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 10-22-04/11-2-04	291	\$203,350

STATEWIDE CANDIDATES	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 7-26-02/8-6-02	471	\$434,662
CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 10-25-02/11-5-02	354	\$497,859

FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

Attachment 3

Date 1-26-06

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS PLUS TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT
LAST ELEVEN DAYS PRIOR TO AN ELECTION

2004 REPRESENTATIVES FEDERAL/STATE AFFAIRS COMM.	PRE-PRIMARY 7/23/2004 - 8/3/2004		PRE-GENERAL 10/22/2004 - 11/2/2004	
	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTIONS	NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTIONS
EDMONDS	1	\$500	9	\$3,400
SIEGFREID	-0-	-0-	1	\$500
BURROUGHS	-0-	-0-	1	\$500
BROWN	6	\$3,000	-0-	-0-
BRUNK	-0-	-0-	4	\$1,900
COX	2	\$900	-0-	-0-
CRAFT	2	\$850	1	\$500
DAHL	1	\$500	2	\$1,000
DILLMORE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
HAWK	1	\$300	3	\$1,500
HENDERSON	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
KELSEY	3	\$2,000	1	\$500
KINZER	1	\$500	1	\$500
JOHNSON	3	\$1,300	2	\$1,000
LOGANBILL	-0-	-0-	2	\$1,000
MAH	1	\$500	1	\$350
McCRAY-MILLER	2	\$700	-0-	-0-
MERRICK	-0-	-0-	3	\$1,500
MORRISON	-0-	-0-	3	\$1,500
MYERS	4	\$1,900	3	\$1,300
OHARAH	-0-	-0-	4	*\$6,000
RUFF	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
WILK	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

* Party Committee Donations

FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
Attachment 4
Date 1-26-06

2004
PAC INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE ACTIVITY

CLUB FOR GROWTH PAC
10-25-04 AND 1-10-05 REPORTS

Postage	\$28,663	
Printing/Mailings/Radio Time	<u>\$82,674</u>	
TOTAL	\$111,337	Who did this benefit?

KANSANS FOR A MODERATE GOVERNMENT
10-25-04 AND 1-10-05 REPORTS

Postage	\$22,004	
Printing	\$26,645	
GOTV Calls	<u>\$ 9,807</u>	
TOTAL	\$58,456	Who did this benefit?

2002
PAC INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE ACTIVITY

PRO-KAN-DO PAC
10-28-02 AND 1-10-03 REPORTS

Printing and Postage	\$29,527	
Telephone Bank Calls	<u>\$43,187</u>	
TOTAL	\$72,714	Who did this benefit?

KANSANS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

Radio Advertisements	\$153,100	
Telephone Bank Calls	<u>\$ 98,222</u>	
TOTAL	\$251,322	Who did this benefit?

FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

Attachment 5

Date 1-26-06

EDITORIALS

KANSAS DISCLOSURE LAWS

Campaign donors should be named

Be it evolution or campaign disclosure, Kansas seems determined these days to argue subjects that other states consider settled.

Take the issue of money spent to benefit candidates. Americans quibble over how much should be spent, and how. But there has been widespread agreement that the public has the right to know *who* is funding campaigns.

Except in the Kansas Legislature. A bill that would require public disclosure of the sponsors of "issue ads" is stalled in a Senate committee. The same committee is holding up a measure that would require political action committees and party committees to identify candidates that are targets of those groups.

The House also has been slow to move on badly needed campaign disclosure legislation, although a bipartisan group of representatives formed last week to give the issue momentum.

The Campaign Disclosure Project, by the UCLA School of Law and other groups, last year gave Kansas a failing grade — with a rank of 37th among the 50 states — on disclosing the sources of money

in politics.

The Senate has made some headway by passing a bill requiring that contributions to candidates in the final 11 days of a campaign must be disclosed within 48 hours. The Senate also approved a measure requiring recorded campaign telephone calls to disclose who paid for them. Those are good steps.

But forward-thinking legislators must move quickly to overcome the ludicrous argument of some conservative lawmakers that a flier or broadcast isn't a campaign ad unless it specifically asks voters to support a candidate. Conservative candidates benefited from ads last fall by an anti-tax group, which lavished praise on candidates but omitted the "vote for" message.

"It's important for the legislators themselves to know who is spending money in their races," said Bob Stern, president of the Los Angeles-based Center for Government Studies, who testified at a Kansas Senate hearing.

So it would seem. But even if legislators are content with keeping themselves in the dark, they've no right to withhold information from the public.



Disclose

Voters need information on campaigns

Kansas' campaign finance disclosure laws are a joke. And it's good to see that some state legislators are serious about reforming them.

Kansas was one of 17 states in 2004 that received an "F" from the Center for Governmental Studies for failing to give voters full and timely information about who is financially supporting candidates and ballot measures, as well as who is behind the sometimes shadowy ad campaigns waged on candidates' behalf.

"Under current law, Kansans are left in the dark regarding where much of the money spent to elect or defeat candidates is coming from," Rep. Ed O'Malley, R-Roeland Park, said last week.

O'Malley is among a bipartisan group of 25 House members — including Wichita-area Reps. Jo Ann Pottorff, Nile Dillmore, Geraldine Flaharty, Tom Sawyer, Jim Ward and Oletha Faust-Goudeau — who recently announced legislation that would include all of the reforms recommended in 2004 by the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission. The key provisions require:

- Disclosure of sponsors behind political advertising on recorded telephone messages, as is required for TV, radio and print ads.

- Political action committees and

party committees to identify the candidate or issue targeted for defeat or election.

- Disclosure of the financing behind so-called "issue ads."

- Timely disclosure of campaign contributions made in the final 11 days of an election. At present, because of early

reporting deadlines, voters might not find out who made significant last-minute contributions until months after a primary or general election — too late to guide their vote.

Former Lt. Gov. Shelby Smith of Wichita has made another good suggestion: Give voters prompt and free access to these campaign disclosure reports on the secretary of state's Web site.

Making the information available in an easy, useful format will help

make these changes meaningful to ordinary voters.

This is about good government and the integrity of elections. Kansas voters have a right to know what groups and money are exerting influence on campaigns.

With the 2006 election looming, this bill is a timely, bipartisan reform measure that deserves quick passage when the Legislature reconvenes.

— For the editorial board, Randy Scholfield



Before they go in the voting booth, citizens need to know who is helping bankroll campaigns.

Reform

Legislators resisting campaign transparency

If it looks like a campaign ad and sounds like a campaign ad, it's a campaign ad — and it ought to be subject to all campaign finance disclosure rules.

The Kansans bombarded by the pre-election fliers and ads last summer and fall had no trouble recognizing them as campaign ads. They got the message, never mind that it lacked a "vote for" tagline.

But with time running out on the 2005 legislative session, some at the Statehouse are using inaction to tacitly endorse the shadowy status quo — no doubt because it helped oust some key moderate Republican incumbents last year.

To its partial credit, the Kansas Senate recognized the obvious need for some reform, already passing two election measures this year that have been sought by the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission. One would require that a candidate's contributions and expenditures in the final 11 days of a campaign be disclosed within 48 hours — not unreported until months after Election Day, as they are now. The other would require those annoying recorded cam-

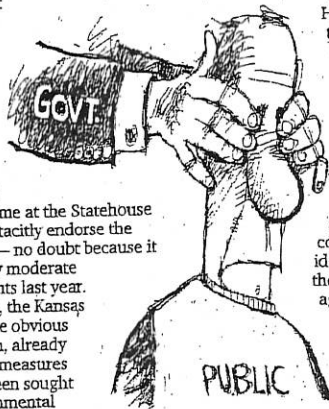
paign phone calls to say who paid for them. Both changes are needed, but they don't do anything to force the funders of the shadow groups into the sunshine. Legislation to do that is stalled in both chambers.

A bipartisan quartet of House members — none of them from the Wichita area, unfortunately — began applying some pressure Monday in the form of a new House bill. Their top priority is requiring that sponsors of "issue ads" identify themselves and their funding sources. They also want political action committees and parties to identify which candidates they are working for or against.

"Kansans have a right to know who is funding campaigns in this state," said Rep. Ed O'Malley, R-Roeland Park.

More legislators need to drop the resistance and act on behalf of that right, in the process giving Kansas voters the benefit of clean, transparent campaigns.

— For the editorial board, Rhonda Holman



FROM YOU FROM.

CROWSON'S VIEW

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS. ANYTHING YOU SAY IN AN ISSUE AD MAY BE USED AGAINST THE CANDIDATE OF YOUR CHOICE, AND THE KANSAS

PUBLIC WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT 'EM!



READING 'EM THEIR RIGHTS

NOW, HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE TO THE KEYSSTONE KOPS' 2005 RE-ELECTION FUND?

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