

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Steve Huebert at 3:30 p.m. on January 28, 2009, in Room 446-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Steve Brunk- excused
Representative Bill Otto- excused
Representative Mike Peterson- excused

Committee staff present:

Ken Wilke, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Florence Deeter, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Bob Corkins, Content Editor for KansasVotes.org, Flint Hills Public Policy Center

Others attending:

See attached list.

The Chairman called the meeting to order and opened the floor for bill introductions. As point of privilege he introduced a bill to change the constitutional amendment regarding vacancies in statewide offices. There being no objection, it will be introduced as a committee bill.

The Chairman called for introduction of a bill to prohibit the use of tax payer money for lobbying purposes. There being no objection, it will be introduced as a committee bill.

Representative Schwab requested a bill stating that any individual or company seeking contracts with the state must register as a lobbyist. He further requested a bill requiring any monies of at least \$1,000 submitted in reports to the Ethics Commission be itemized with name, address and amount contributed to a campaign. There being no objections, both bills will be introduced as committee bills.

The Chairman introduced Bob Corkins, Content Editor for KansasVotes.org, Flint Hills Public Policy Center. Mr. Corkins provided background of the organization, stating it has been in existence for fifteen years and is non-partisan and non-profit ([Attachment 1](#)). He said KansasVotes.org is a free web page which was launched in December 2008 and is funded through private grants and donations. His demonstration included features of the site and the ease with which bill searches, voting summaries, blogs and forums can be utilized. Mr. Corkins said that privacy is non-issue since the only personal information needed to use the site is an email address.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2009.

HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

GUEST LIST

DATE: Jan. 28, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
Karen Debraaf	Rep Pete Debraaf
Jai Desai	Rep. Delia Garcia

I. Flint Hills Center organization background

- A. Non-partisan, non-profit
- B. # years in operation 15 transparency issues

II. KansasVotes.org's basic design principles

- A. Offer FREE service to grassroots voters
 - 1. Funded through private grants and donations
 - 2. Website advertising envisioned, but not yet part
 - 3. Competing websites require fee for some or all of their features
- Highlight → B. Non-partisan & non-inflammatory
- C. Advance TRANSPARENCY in government - know how to leg. voted
- C. Comprehensive: covers all bills and all recorded votes
- D. Easy to use
 - 1. Compare bill searches on kslegislature.org
 - a. No voting summaries for each lawmaker
 - b. No bill sponsor summary for each lawmaker
 - c. No bill summary unless hearing held...also more click-throughs to find
 - d. For Keyword search, must click two levels within (ours is on home page)
 - e. No search of bill subject categories
 - f. Bill histories require separate search (ours automatically displayed)
 - 2. Understandable bill descriptions
- E. Stimulate debate and provide entertainment (e.g., blogs & forums)

III. KansasVotes.org site features

- A. Home page
 - 1. Quick Search
 - a. For now, must type in "hb" or "sb" before bill number (eventually, we'll simplify)
 - b. ASK AUDIENCE for search examples...click thru to show them what they get
 - c. When at any given bill description, click on [Vote Details and Comments]
 - 2. Recent Comments...(sample of latest blog or forum posts)
 - 3. Most Viewed Bills
 - 4. Talk on the Blog...(posts restricted to question we ask)
 - 5. Blog Aggregator...(constantly updated feeds from six Kansas issue blogs, left & right)
 - 6. Forums...(all are managed by KansasVotes.org)
 - 7. Wikis...(all are managed by other independent websites, these are merely links to them)
- B. Review page links located on red bar at top of Home Page

IV. Openness of KansasVotes.org

- A. No screening of views; blog & forum deletions are exercised only for profanity, obscenity, and spam.
- B. Privacy: the only personal info needed to register is your email address (which can easily be anonymous and generic, such as an AOL or GMAIL account)
- C. Blog aggregator can be modified; we can add or subtract any number of blog feeds to achieve a good representative mix of politically right-and-left views of Kansans.

V. Transparency issues discovered/highlighted during the site's development

- A. Kansas is in the minority of states that permit Committee-sponsored bills
- B. Kansas budget process does not allow very accurate bill status reporting