

February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Chairman Ostmeyer, Vice Chairman LaTurner, Ranking Member Faust-Goudeau and honorable members of the committee:

As a member of not only this committee but of the larger 165-member assembly that comprises the upper and lower chambers of the people's legislature, I ask that you earnestly consider the benefits of enacting Senate Bill 223.

As representatives of our communities and of the citizens of the state of Kansas we have the duty to responsibly administer the people's business. Inherent in that responsibility is an obligation that we conduct our affairs in the most efficient and fiscally sensible manner that we are able. The authors of our state constitution wisely saw fit to place a hard cap on the duration of our legislative sessions at 90 days. It is my firm conviction that we as a body can reliably accomplish our legislative duties in a much more efficient manner.

Currently, it costs the taxpayers of Kansas \$66,000 per day to operate the Kansas legislature. By limiting the duration of the regular legislative session each year to 60 days rather than 90, we would be saving the taxpayers of Kansas roughly \$1,980,000 annually. I need not impress upon you how fundamentally important it is that we carefully consider any action that has the potential to reduce the yearly operational expense of the Kansas Legislature. If measures such as this may even incrementally lessen the financial burden we place upon our biennial state budget, it is our duty to fully consider it.

In 2014 this legislature successfully passed into law only 13.3% of all bills that were before it during session. From 2010 to 2013 those numbers were 14.2%, 18.0%, 24.8%, and 20.5%, respectively. The last time more than a quarter of the bills placed before us were signed into law was in 1995, meaning that for the past two decades the success rate of this body has remained more or less static. If the Kansas legislature is provided with only 60 days to perform its work, then this body will accomplish its work in only 60 days.

Understand that this is not a novel or untested approach to legislative governance. Similarly situated—and even much larger states—employ similar legislative timelines. Where the population of the state of Kansas is nearly approximately 2.8 million people, and its legislature meets for 90 days each session, the Arkansas and Utah legislatures, whose populations are both roughly equal to our own each operate with 60 day sessions. In Louisiana, with a state population of 4.65 million, their legislature accomplishes its work in 60 days; so too in Florida, with a population of nearly 20 million.

The most illustrative example of a legislature's ability to accomplish the work before them in their allotted timeframe belongs to the legislature of the state of Virginia, which convenes for just 30 days each year. Setting a quicker fuse on our deliberations will force us to separate the wheat from the chaff. If we are forced to more efficiently focus our energies, then our energies will necessarily become more focused upon those pieces of legislation that truly matter.

I thank you for your consideration of SB 223.

Sincerely,

State Senator Tom Holland  
3<sup>rd</sup> District