

Approved: Feb. 11, 2010
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lana Gordon at 3:30 p.m. on February 8, 2010, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative Owen Donohoe- excused

Representative Pat George- excused

Committee staff present:

Doug Taylor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Reed Holwegner, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Brandon Riffel, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Ann Deitcher, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Senator Anthony Hensley,

Senator David Haley,

Representative Melvin Neufeld,

Charles Jean-Baptiste, Johnson County NAACP Unit

Cheryl Brown Henderson, President, Brown Foundation for Educational Equity,
Excellence & Research

Jeffrey M. Russell, Director, Legislative Administrative Services

SB 54 - concerning the state capitol and grounds.

The Chair called on Reed Holwegner who explained Chapter 75, Article 36, 105 and 106 of the State Departments; Public Officers and Employees regarding the construction and placement of memorials as well as restrictions. (Attachment 1).

Doug Taylor then addressed the Committee in regard to a statehouse art and history committee and what the committee should consist of. (Attachment 2).

Next on the agenda was Cheryl Brown Henderson who spoke in support of **SB 54** saying that the bill represented the recognition of the unique history of Kansas. (Attachment 3).

Ms Henderson said she supported **SB 54** because it proposed placing a mural on the walls of the capitol that would depict the historic continuum as a state and Kansas' pivotal role in civil rights history. She told the Committee that Topeka was the site of two earlier school desegregation cases, one in 1903, *Reynolds vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*, and then again in 1941, *Graham vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*, prior to *Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka*, which was filed in 1951.

Quoting the words of Justice John Marshall Harlan, Ms Henderson closed by saying "Our Constitution is color blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among our citizens. In respect to civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law."

Senator Hensley spoke next in support of **SB 54** telling the Committee that *Brown vs. Board of Education* was not simply a story about courage and hope. It initiated educational and social reform throughout the United States, paved the way for the modern Civil Rights Movement and laid the foundation for international policies concerning human rights throughout the world. (Attachment 4).

Questions and answers followed.

Appearing next was Senator Haley who in his support of **SB 54** said that regarding this simple legislative directive would compel the planning and the placing of a mural on one of our newly renovated Capitol walls, the theme of which would be the landmark legal case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. (Attachment 5).

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Economic Development and Tourism Committee at 3:30 p.m. on February 8, 2010, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

Charles Jean-Baptiste thanked the Committee for providing him the opportunity to come before them in support of **SB 54**. (Attachment 6 6).

Mr. Jean-Baptiste pointed out that the mural would not be funded utilizing taxpayers resources but would be funded through private donations and contributions. Guidelines and procedures would be established for receiving and accepting contributions and donations.

Saying that he was very much in support of **SB 54**, Mr. Jean-Baptiste said it was because he felt that every visitor to the State Capitol would leave with a greater appreciation of the Capitol and with a visual imprint that would last forever.

Representative Neufeld spoke briefly in support of **SB 54**, and offered an amendment that would change the procedure for appointing members to the Statehouse Art and History Committee. It would also eliminate all of subsection (d) of the bill, replacing it with language that gave the Committee the responsibility for overseeing reconfiguration of committee rooms and office space. (No written testimony was provided by Representative Neufeld.)

Questions and answers followed.

Jeff Russell was in attendance and spoke briefly to the Committee regarding the possible formation of a committee that would encompass all the areas of the statehouse restoration instead of the various committees that are now involved.

Questions and answers followed.

The Chair spoke to the Committee regarding the formation of a sub-committee to study **SB 54**.

The hearing on **SB 54** was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 10, 2010.