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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**KEVIN JONES**

5TH DISTRICT

Chairman Waymaster and members of the appropriation committee,

HB2747 establishes a State Auditor accountable to voters and taxpayers. The intention is to give the audit function greater autonomy yet keep accountability to the electorate not the policy makers.

Government has grown too large, and the mechanisms for accountability have become diluted with no clear party responsible for effective oversight. As a military veteran, I know firsthand that clear lines of leadership are key to the success of a mission, that's why we need an empowered State Auditor who is directly accountable to the voters of our state.

Recent scandals have highlighted a need for Kansas to establish more rigorous oversight. The audit function currently in place is subject to political influence by a large committee within the legislature. It is a process further hampered by the sporadic nature of legislative oversight – whether by direct audit or committee hearing as oversight largely amounts to but a few meetings spread over months. Worse yet is oversight exercised solely within interrelated bureaucracies. In either case, there is no easily identifiable and consistently accountable party for these efforts on behalf of taxpayers.

Oversight is about efficiency and effectiveness. There has been a proposal that would bring back the office temporarily but make its continued existence contingent on whether the auditor can find more waste than its overall budget, and other proposals creating a whole new elected office of auditor. HB2747 calls for reenergizing the existing, largely dormant, elective office of State Treasurer. It's time we restored the stewardship and oversight authority to the Treasurer that is expected by Kansas taxpayers of our chief financial officer.

By a simple majority vote of both the House and Senate, along with the signature of the governor, HB2747 can be enacted immediately. By empowering the elected Kansas State Treasurer, there is no need to amend our constitution to grow government with the addition of yet another political office and duplicative bureaucracy.

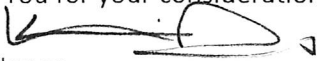
A State Auditor is needed as evidenced by recent scandals involving allegations of corruption at the Department of Commerce, misappropriation of funds at the Kansas Department of Education, and ongoing reports of irregularities regarding the use of STAR bond financing. Additionally, at time when the state is seeking revenues for education and other services, decades of accumulated tax exemptions, abatements, rebates, and other state funded incentives totaling in the billions of dollars have largely escaped review of their value and effectiveness.

HB2747 meets the immediacy of need, while achieving accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, without burdening taxpayers with an expansion of government.

Here is what the bill does:

- Division of post audit becomes a new division of the state treasurer's office.
- Post auditor becomes director of post audit.
- State treasurer has oversight of the division and is solely responsible for assigning audits (other than those already approved by legislative post audit committee or required by law).
- Legislative post audit committee would be abolished and replaced by the state audit committee. Same membership but no longer allowed to direct audits. Can suggest audits to state treasurer.
- Ability to hire 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors remains.

Thank You for your consideration,



Kevin Jones

Representative 5<sup>th</sup> Kansas House District