

SENATE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

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STATE OF KANSAS

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Organization, Calendar and Rules

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Federal and State Affairs
Natural Resources
Pensions, Investments and Benefits
State Finance Council
CSG Executive Committee
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 1, 2011

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Senate reports significant progress, balanced budget at first adjournment

Senate leadership today reported significant progress - including passage of a balanced budget - as the Legislature reaches first adjournment. The Legislature is expected to adjourn later today (April 1) before returning April 27 for its Veto Session.

"We set some very clear priorities going into this Legislative Session," said Senate President Steve Morris. "Staying focused on those priorities has paid off. We've been able to pass significant pieces of legislation, most notably a balanced budget, a solid voter ID plan and changes in our tax policy that will help grow the state's economy."

The Senate reported the following progress on its priorities:

- **Balancing the budget.** This past week, the Senate overwhelmingly approved its budget proposal (Substitute for SB 234), which will cut \$800 million in total spending and leave the state with a positive ending balance.

"These are difficult economic times that call for difficult decisions," said Sen. Carolyn McGinn, chair of the Senate Ways & Means Committee. "But, in the end, we put together a responsible budget that cuts spending, holds the line on our taxes, and keeps our state on track for economic recovery. We'll continue to monitor the state's finances as the Session moves forward."

- **Revitalizing our economy.** The Senate undertook a number of major initiatives this Session designed to improve the business climate in Kansas and spur job growth. Chief among those are legislation that will: Rebuild the state's unemployment fund without reducing weekly benefits for Kansans who have found themselves looking for work in this economy (SB 77); Reform workers compensation in Kansas (Senate Substitute for HB 2134); Bring the state's public employees

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retirement plan back into balance (HB 2194); promote economic development and population growth in our rural communities (SB 198); and prepare our workforce to meet the increasing demand for more engineers. (Senate Substitute for HB 2149).

“Every action we take this Session must be geared toward the economic recovery of our state,” said Senate Vice President John Vratil. “First and foremost, we must create an environment where employers can find a stable tax structure, skilled workforce, sound infrastructure and the quality of life they need to thrive.

- **Protecting the Kansas way of life.** In balancing the budget, the Senate successfully worked to minimize cuts to K-12 education; protect services for the elderly so that Kansas seniors can continue to stay in their own homes if they wish to do so; stabilize funding for Kansas universities, community colleges and technical colleges; and provide additional funding to help alleviate the number of disabled Kansans on waiting lists for services.

“Like most states, we’re trying to do more with less,” said Senate Majority Leader Jay Emler. “But, as we move into the last stretch of this Legislative Session, I think we’ve been able to do that without jeopardizing the things that matter most to Kansans.”

When the Legislature returns on April 27 for its Veto Session, the Senate and House will work to negotiate differences between their respective budget proposals before forwarding a final version of the budget to Governor Brownback for his consideration.

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