

SENATE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Stephen R. Morris

President of the Kansas Senate
Senator, 39th District
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STATE OF KANSAS

Committee Assignments:

Chairman:
Interstate Cooperation Committee
Legislative Coordinating Council
Organization, Calendar and Rules
NCSL Chair of Standing Committees

Member:
Capitol Restoration Commission
Federal and State Affairs
Natural Resources
Pensions, Investments and Benefits
State Finance Council
CSG Executive Committee
The Energy Council Executive Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP OFFER STATEMENTS IN REACTION TO GOVERNOR SAM BROWNBACK'S FIRST STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS Formation of KPERS Select Committee Announced

TOPEKA -- Republican leaders in the Kansas State Senate this evening issued supportive statements in reaction to Governor Sam Brownback's first State of the State Address which took place in the Kansas House of Representatives Chamber in the Kansas Statehouse tonight.

Senate President Stephen R. Morris, R-Hugoton, stated, "Governor Brownback did a good job tonight of laying out his agenda and outlining his priorities. He has set an austere path for what is certainly a challenging economic situation. I commend him and his team for their hard work. I particularly applaud their commitment to protect our most vulnerable citizens. The Senate stands ready to respond immediately to the Governor's call to address the long-standing problems in KPERS, our state retirement system. Clearly there will be no quick-fixes or easy answers this session, but I am prepared to work with the Governor, and my colleagues in the Senate and House to craft a balanced budget, fund education, take care of our human services caseloads and meet our other responsibilities and obligations."

Newly installed Senate Majority Leader Jay Scott Emler, R-Lindsborg, said, "The Governor's proposal appears to be the first all-funds budget reduction since the 1970's. I am encouraged that total state funding for education is not going down. It is going to be very difficult, but this is but one more difficult year in a series of two to three difficult years. I look forward to working with my fellow senators through this process."

"Governor Brownback has presented his budget, and I commend his efforts," commented Senate Vice President John Vratil, R-Leawood, adding, "I'm concerned about K-12 funding. Public education is the most important function of state government. A strong public education system is the number one most effective economic development tool. I'm ready to work with the Governor to address our budget challenges."

In the Governor's address, Brownback called upon the Senate to take a comprehensive look at the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System and address the problems that have plagued the system for years. Ready with their response, the Senate Republican Leadership team announced the creation of the KPERS Select Committee and released the names of those appointed to serve on the committee:

Chair – Senate President Stephen R. Morris

Vice Chair – Senator Jeff King, R-Independence

Members –

Senate Vice President John Vratil

Senator Ruth Teichman, R-Stafford

Senator Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka

Senator Jeff Longbine, R-Emporia

Senator Terrie Huntington, R-Fairway

Senator Ty Masterson, R-Andover

Senator Bob Marshall, R-Ft. Scott

Senator Laura Kelly, D-Topeka, Ranking Minority

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka

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