Day 91 and Counting….Traditionally, the Kansas Legislature meets annually for 90 days; however, knowing they would be crafting a two year budget and have the extra challenge presented by a massive budget shortfall, legislative leadership planned for a 100 day session in 2017 and a shorter session, 80 days, the following year in 2018. While well-intended, that plan may have been overly optimistic as legislators complete their 91st day today, May 15, with three major items still on their plate...

1. a new K-12 funding plan that meets judicial approval
2. a two year budget that addresses the anticipated $900 million-plus budget deficit predicted for FY 2018 and FY 2019
3. a tax plan that will bring in much-needed revenue to fund the proposed budget

In the simplest of terms, the above items have become a “which comes first, the chicken or the egg” issue for legislators. Many have said they will not vote on a tax plan until they know the actual dollar amount for the FY 2018 and FY 2019 budgets — they don’t want to raise more taxes than actually needed. Others believe having an idea of the amount a new tax plan would bring in will help prioritize the budget - establish the tax plan first and then adapt the budget to the amount of available funds. Add in all those who adamantly oppose a tax increase of any kind and/or those who will only vote for a tax or budget bill if their pet piece of legislation moves forward and you have a major log jam.

Just to make things even more complicated, the courts did not specify a dollar amount that would satisfy their ruling to create a new school funding formula by June 30, 2017, that better serves at-risk students in the state. There are those who believe an amount needs to be built into the funding plan while others think funding for Kansas schools should be in the overall budget bill.

Session secretaries finished their work last Friday, so offices are dark most of the day. Almost all committees have finished their work for the session and leadership is not inclined to roll out anything new that might slow the process. Conference committees are meeting to make final compromises on a few remaining bills. All the above and more have led to very...slow...progress...at...the...statehouse.

Positive News for KCSL…..As we review the work of the 2017 legislature, Kansas Children’s Service League has seen progress on several of the organization’s legislative priorities.
• **Erin’s Law**, which would have required Kansas school personnel to have an annual in-service training on how to recognize childhood sexual abuse victims, was eliminated from a juvenile justice bill. The Kansas State Board of Education opposed this legislation because of its cost to smaller school districts and questioned the need for annual training. KCSL believed that an hour or less of annual training did not properly prepare school personnel for helping a sexual abuse victim, could retraumatize a child victim or lead to a false report and put the responsibility of reporting the inappropriate incident on the child. As a compromise, the State Board of Education plans to put together a working group to look at best practices for dealing with childhood sexual abuse and report their work to the legislature during the 2018 session. They have already indicated that they would like to work with KCSL to identify the best way of reaching out to childhood sexual abuse victims.

• **Foster Care Task Force** continues to move forward in the process. After overwhelming approval in the House, the proposed legislation moves to the Senate. A review of the State’s foster care system has been discussed for a number of years and became a priority after the most recent Legislative Post Audit report of the system. The task force is charged with the responsibility to review the level of oversight and supervision by the Department of Children and Families over foster care contractors and review the duties of those individuals responsible for foster children and other areas of concern regarding foster care. KCSL hopes to have representation on the task force.

• The Senate Ways and Means Committee has added $3.0 million in TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) funds for KCSL’s home visitation program, **Healthy Families**, in their omnibus bill, S Sub for HB 2002. The bill is on General Orders in the Senate. The House has yet to complete their omnibus bill, but KCSL remains hopeful that they, too, will agree to use these federal funds to strengthen Kansas families. This action would be a tremendous boost to the Healthy Families program.

**Bills to Watch....**

**H Sub for SB 42**: Children and Minors; relating to the revised juvenile justice code (Corrections and Juvenile Justice) Related bills: **HB 2048**, concerning crimes, punishment and criminal procedure, relating to search warrants and Erin’s Law; **Sub for HB 2264**, making updates to the revised juvenile justice code. **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REMOVES ERIN’S LAW LANGUAGE AND HOUSE APPROVES CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT, 118-3**

**SB 95**: Authorizing telephonic signatures for public assistance (Public Health and Welfare) **APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR**
H Sub for SB 126: Establishing the foster care task force (Children and Seniors) 
*HOUSE PASSES AS AMENDED, 120-0; PENDING CONCUR OR NON-CONCUR IN SENATE*


S Sub for HB 2002: Making and concerning appropriations for fiscal years ending June 30, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 for state agencies (Omnibus budget bill) *General Orders - Senate*

HB 2044: Clubhouse community-based psychosocial rehabilitation program; medicaid expansion (Public Health and Welfare) *Related bills: HB 2064, establishing the KanCare bridge to a healthy Kansas program. GOVERNOR’S VETO SUSTAINED*

HB 2048: An act concerning school districts; relating to teacher training and student instruction; addressing child sexual abuse; establishing Erin’s Law (Ways and Means) *Related bill: H Sub for SB 42*

Sub for HB 2052: Appropriations revisions for FY 2017, FY 2018 and FY 2019 for various state agencies; Rescission bill (Ways and Means) *APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR*

HB 2180: Increasing the health maintenance organization privilege fee and extending the medical assistance fee fund (Appropriations) *Passed House 103-21; referred to Ways and Means*


HB 2425: Adding household members to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect (Federal and State) *Hearing Tuesday, May 16, 8:00 a.m., Rm. 346-S*

Resource: Additional information about the Kansas Legislature and the 2017 legislative session see — [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org)

Kansas Legislative Hotline: 1-800-432-3924 (in-state); 1-785-296-2149 (out of state)