

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Al Lane at 9:06 a.m. on January 19, 2000 in Room 521-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: All members were present

Committee staff present: Bob Nugent, Revisor of Statutes
Jerry Donaldson, Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
Bev Adams, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Richard Beyer, Secretary, KDHR
Phil Harness, KDHR
William Sanders, KDHR
Roger Aeschliman, KDHR
A. J. Kotich, KDHR
Bill Layes, KDHR

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Lane announced that Thursday's meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. There was no one present today who wanted to introduce a bill. Bill introductions will also be heard on Thursday, January 20.

Chairman Lane introduced Richard Beyer, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Human Resources (KDHR). Secretary Beyer made a few remarks about the purpose of the Human Resources Department in Kansas, which is essentially the state's labor department. The department is the lead agency in the workforce development system. They partner with all the other agencies in the workforce arena such as the Social and Rehabilitation Services, Department of Education, the Board of Regents, and Department of Commerce and Housing, etc. They are all working together to make a stronger and more productive system for employers and citizens of Kansas.

Secretary Beyer furnished the committee with an organizational chart of KDHR and the Strategic Planning Initiative 2000. He shared the vision of the department which is to envision a Kansas where people of wide ranging talents and vital enterprises prosper in a resource rich, diverse state. He then shared with the committee the highlights of their strategic objections. Mr. Beyer explained the organizational chart and introduced several of the executive management team. As they were introduced, they each gave a short presentation of their division and answered questions from the committee. (See Attachment 1) Also handed out were the Workers Compensation 25th Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1999 and the Kansas Employment Security Law Employer Handbook with 1999 Legislative Changes. These booklet are available from the Kansas Department of Human Resources, 401 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, Kansas 66603-3182.

Phil Harness, Director of Workers Compensation briefly explained the purpose of his division. He brought the committee up to date on the division's compliance with recommendations made by the post audit report of last year. He stressed the importance of the committee acting quickly on **SB 219**, which now sits in our committee. The bill was agreed on and recommended for passage by the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council. Later he will present a request for amendments to the boiler inspector statutes.

William Sanders, newly appointed as the Chief Information Officer and Director of Employment Security, KDHR, briefly told of the history of the employment security law. Their department provides temporary weekly unemployment checks to qualified unemployed workers. The latest report of unemployment placed our rate in Kansas at 3.3%. He brought the committee up to date on the trust fund, which now has enough to cover the payout of unemployment benefits for one year and eleven months. This meets and exceeds the low end of the federal requirement of having eighteen months at the highest payout rate during the last fifteen years. The call centers for reporting for unemployed workers is working well, with the process sometimes taking as little as twelve minutes to process a claim. This takes the place of workers having to report to an unemployment office to qualify for benefits. Handed out to the committee was a proposed federal rule which

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE, Room 521-S
Statehouse, at 9:06 a.m. on January 19, 2000.

would cover birth and adoption leave by tapping the unemployment fund. The Employment Security Advisory Council is taking a wait and see attitude towards this new proposed ruling. (See Attachment 2)

Heather Whitley, Director of Employment and Training, KDHR, was traveling today so Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary, KDHR, gave her update to the committee on the Division of Employment and Training. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 takes effect July 1, 2000. Nearly three years of planning and development have gone into this implementation to this point. On this date there will be seven "One Stop" centers up and running in Kansas. Then the review, monitoring and evaluation of the program begins. In the written testimony are several legislative actions which would positively impact the state. Important among these is the development of a joint committee or sub-committee to be the leading entity on workforce development. (See Attachment 3)

A. J. Kotich, Chief Counsel, KDHR, is working with the revisor to write bills which would remove obsolete statutes, and clarify or upgrade others. These amendments involve the Boiler Safety Act, the Public Employees Relations Act, changing the minimum wage in Kansas, and moving the filing of maps of coal and other types of mines to state geologists instead of KDHR. They are also doing research that will help them write amendments to our child labor laws to bring them up to date with other states.

Bill Lays, Chief of Labor Market Information Services (LMIS), and his staff are responsible for collecting, analyzing and publishing data that relate to all facets of the labor market. These activities provide information about the condition of the economy at the national, regional, state and local levels. Much of this information is presented in publications that are available upon request. Some of these publications are written with projections for the use of the education department and others to develop curriculum. Others have such information as the jobs which are available without a college education. (See Attachment 4)

Secretary Beyer ended the presentation by introducing others from the team: Brad Hamilton, Director of Kansas Commission on Native American Affairs; Tina DeLaRosa, Director of Kansas Advisory Committee on Hispanic Affairs; Tomeka Franklin, Director of Kansas Advisory Commission on African American Affairs; Martha Gabehart, Director of Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns; Kris Kitchen, Heartland Works; Mike O'Hara, Service Market Area Manager; Doug Hager, Executive Director of the Public Employees Relations Board; Linda Tierce, Chief of Benefits; Janet Palmer, Director of Personnel; and David Shufelt, Workers Compensation Division.

Chairman Lane adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

The next scheduled meeting is January 20, 2000.