

# SENATE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

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## SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP UNVEIL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TOPEKA – In a 9:00 a.m. Senate Chamber news conference, the Kansas Senate Republican Leaders today revealed their outline of legislative priorities for the 2007 Legislative Session which started yesterday.

The Senate Republican Leadership plan, entitled “Priorities for Progress” was prepared and distributed to media, lobbyists and staff who attended the news conference. (*NOTE: a copy of the packet is attached to this news release as a pdf document.*) In a presentation led by Senate President Stephen R. Morris (R-Hugoton) and Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt (R-Independence), each priority was identified and briefly explained by the Senator assigned to lead that particular effort.

First and foremost among the priorities is the need to follow through with commitments made last year to fund public education. Republican Senators want to establish a “trust fund” or “lock-box” where the required funds – payable with existing revenues – would be set aside and made unavailable for other projects. This measure has already been introduced in the Senate.

Also discussed were the three task forces established by Senate President Steve Morris: The Senate President’s Task Force on Health Care, to be led by Senator Jim Barnett (R-Emporia), The Senate President’s Task Force on Education, K-12, to be led by Senator Nick Jordan (R-Shawnee) and The Senate President’s Task Force on Education, Higher Ed, to be led by Senator Jean Schodorf, (R-Wichita). Each task force will be comprised of a balance of Republicans and Democrats; individual appointees will be named soon. The task forces are expected to offer recommendations for legislation this session.

Further, Senate Republican leadership emphasized the need for energy independence, for Kansas and for the nation. Senate President Morris stated, “The United States cannot resolve its terrorist threat until we are energy independent, free of our reliance on foreign oil.” The priorities include development of a statewide comprehensive energy plan, bringing Kansas to the forefront in the development and use of ethanol and other biofuels that can be derived from Kansas agricultural products and crops.

***NOTE: The full outline of the Priorities for Progress is included in the attached document.***

Participating in the news conference in addition to Senate President Morris and Senate Majority Leader Schmidt were the following Republican Senators: Jim Barnett (R-Emporia), Karin Brownlee (R-Olathe), Pete Brungardt (R-Salina), Jay Scott Emler (R-Lindsborg), Nick Jordan (R-Shawnee), Carolyn McGinn (R-Sedgwick), Jean Schodorf (R-Wichita), and Mark Taddiken (R-Clifton). Attending in a demonstration of support from the Republican caucus were Pat Apple (R-Louisburg), Tim Huelskamp (R-Fowler), Phil Journey (R-Haysville), Ralph Ostmeyer (R-Grinnell), Peggy Palmer (R-Augusta), Mike Petersen (R-Wichita), Roger Pine (R-Lawrence), Dennis Pyle (R-Hiawatha), Roger Reitz (R-Manhattan), Vicki Schmidt (R-Topeka), Dwayne Umbarger (R-Thayer), John Vratil (R-Leawood), Susan Wagle (R-Wichita) and Dennis Wilson (R-Overland Park).

***NOTE: A photo from the news conference is attached as a jpg image for your use. Please credit senate staff photographer Eric Montgomery.***