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THE AFT-KANSAS NEWSLETTER

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END WORKPLACE BULLYING TODAY!!!!

The Kansas Organization of State of Employees (KOSE) has crafted and is working to pass legislation putting a halt to workplace bullying in state offices. Around our country, from school lunchrooms to professional football locker rooms, the problem of bullying has increasingly come to light. Kansas is no different, and state workers are asking their legislators to require all state agencies acknowledge and address this important issue.

“At least a third of all employees will directly experience health endangering workplace bullying, abuse, and harassment,” said Rebecca Proctor, Executive Director of KOSE, a union representing over 9000 Kansas state employees.

“Last session, the legislature passed a measure requiring all school boards to adopt policies against bullying, not only bullying against students, but bullying against teachers and school staff. Other public employees deserve these same protections.”

KOSE’s proposed bill would require all state agencies to adopt a policy prohibiting workplace bullying. Such policies would include a mechanism to allow for reporting bullying, protections for bullying whistleblowers, specified discipline for violators, and annual public reporting of the

levels of reported bullying within state agencies.

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From Our President

As 2014 kicks off, I am painfully aware as most Kansans are of the tremendous challenges facing our Kansas communities – joblessness, poverty, cut backs on essential public services, and school resources that are being eliminated.

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From the United Teachers of Wichita



United Teachers of Wichita, Local 725, continues to Reclaim the Promise of strong schools and strong communities. UTW has organized efforts in many areas to further the cause.

In an effort to move from Industrial Unionism to Professional Unionism, UTW has begun to provide training and implementation supports for the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards to teachers, administrators and parents. UTW recognizes that a strong work force starts with students who are ready for careers and colleges and our members must be prepared to provide the structure for students to succeed. Members and staff of UTW have received valuable training from AFT in this endeavor.

Adams Elementary School was the recipient of an AFL-CIO grant in the amount of \$5000 in September 2013. UTW and the Wichita/ Hutchinson Labor Fed were proud to present this opportunity. The funds are providing the students of Adams Elementary new books to take home from First

Book. (First Book is a non-profit supported by AFT and others.) The students received their initial books in December and each child will continue to receive new books throughout the school year to add to their home libraries.

For the National Day of Action, December 9, 2013, UTW along with KOSE members from the Finney Building, finalized their Operation Holiday donations to support families in Wichita. Warm hats, gloves, and socks were provided to Operation Holiday that in turn served over 11,000 individuals. UTW knows that supporting our communities is vital to Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education.

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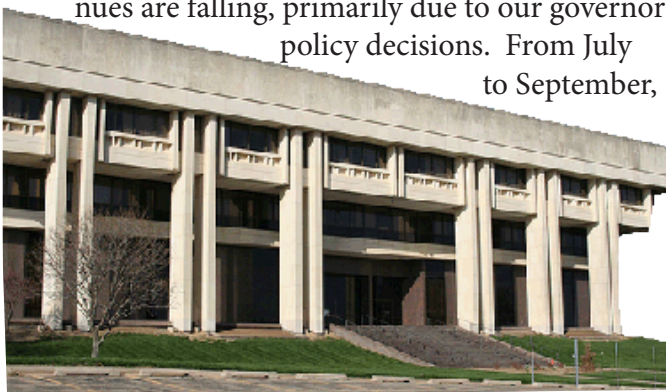
School Funding Lawsuit could impact all state workers

As we open the 2014 legislative session, we are also awaiting a decision from the Kansas Supreme Court in *Gannon v. State of Kansas*. All State employees should be very aware of this case. The Gannon decision could impact your job and your pension.

Under the Kansas Constitution, the State must spend a "suitable" amount on public schools. Eight years ago, the original school finance lawsuit was settled with the Legislature agreeing to increase school funding over a three-year period. Before the three-year period was over, the State imposed school funding cuts of \$511 million per year, leading to current case. In January 2013, a three-judge panel ruled that cuts made to education demonstrated "obvious and continuing" disregard of Constitutional funding requirements.

The governor and several legislators have hinted that they will use this case to justify changes to your pension and cuts to public services, which would mean layoffs. This is because if the Supreme Court upholds the panel's decision, the State could be required to increase school funding by \$500 to \$600 million.

That increase would come at a time when State revenues are falling, primarily due to our governor's policy decisions. From July to September,



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President	Lisa Ochs
Vice President	Randy Mousley
Treasurer	Open
Secretary	Heather Bruce



AFT-Kansas Locals

300	Kansas Organization of State Employees
725	United Teachers of Wichita
5132	KU Nurses Association
6400	KSU Employees
6401	PSU Employees
6403	Graduate Teaching Assistants Coalition
6405	WSU Employees
6406	City of Topeka
6407	Three Lakes Educational Cooperative
6409	Saline Co. Sheriffs Office
6410	Saline Co. Assoc of Public Employees

2013, our governor's policies have resulted in a \$135 million reduction in State revenues. Legislative research projects a net reduction in revenues of half a billion dollars for this fiscal year.

The State has obligations to Kansas students to appropriately fund education, to Kansas public employees to appropriately fund pensions, and to all Kansas citizens to appropriately fund public services. You and I don't get to pick and choose which of our bills we pay...we must pay them all. The State must be held to that same standard. This isn't about choosing public education over public pensions or public services. It is about pursuing responsible fiscal policy that allows the state to meet its obligations to all Kansans.



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Legislative season is upon us. Here is What to Look For.

We are always on the lookout for new bills affecting teachers and public employees, but here are a few still alive from last year we should all keep an eye on:

House Bill 2384 Bill to dismantle the state's civil service system. It would move many executive branch jobs to unclassified service as well as make unclassified any new hires or rehires and anyone who transfers, is promoted, or gets demoted.

House Bill 2027 Bill to strip public employees of collective bargaining rights afforded under the Professional Negotiations Act. It limits what can be addressed in bargaining agreements. This bill would effectively end meaningful collective bargaining.

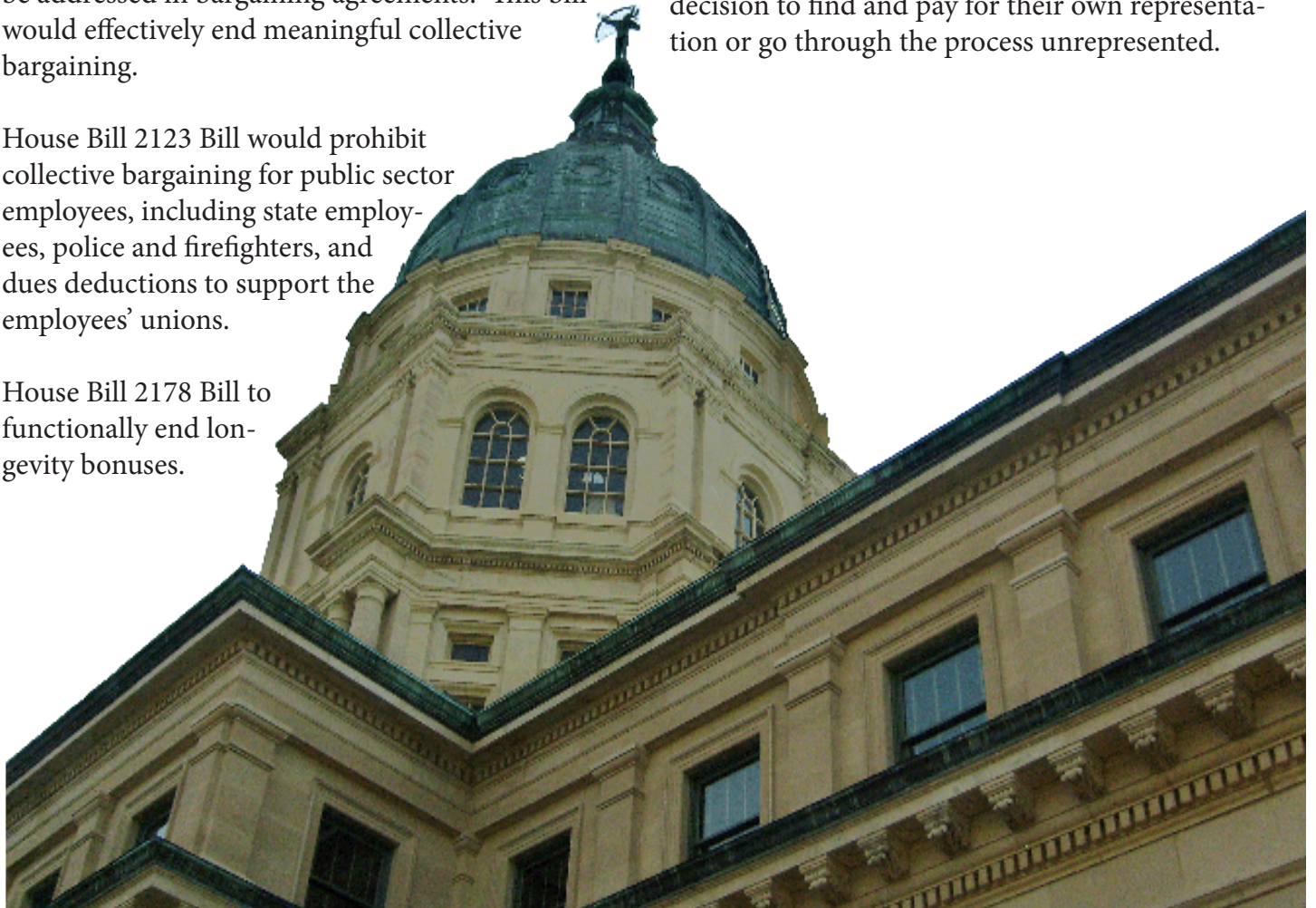
House Bill 2123 Bill would prohibit collective bargaining for public sector employees, including state employees, police and firefighters, and dues deductions to support the employees' unions.

House Bill 2178 Bill to functionally end longevity bonuses.

Since longevity bonuses are statutory there needs to be legislation to end them. This bill is an end-run around that process by suspending longevity bonuses unless they are specifically funded by the legislature. This means that rather than requiring legislative action to stop the bonuses they could be stopped with legislative inaction.

House Bill 2325 Bill to directly end longevity bonuses for any state officer or employee with a service anniversary after the bill is enacted.

House Bill 2179 Bill to remove requirement that the Secretary of Labor appeal wage payment decisions on behalf of employees for payments under \$10K. This would force employees who wish to appeal a decision to find and pay for their own representation or go through the process unrepresented.



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From Our President (Cont'd.)

With these challenges also come opportunities and a sense of optimism that Kansas can once again be a state of moderation, common sense public policies, fairness, and decency. We can once again be proud to live in a state where the rights of citizens and the safety nets for our State's most vulnerable are not systematically destroyed just for the sport.

We will now begin to see the consequences of the Brownback experiment in Kansas. How will this experiment play out in the lives of everyday Kansans? How will this experiment change your community? How will his experiment impact your families? How will this experiment make already difficult work even more challenging?

As we answer these questions, we must also consider our values. When I think about my values, I believe that everyone who would like to find a job can do so, and that the work pays a living wage. I believe that our neighborhood schools should be adequately resourced and provide a safe, welcoming place for learning and teaching – and that our teachers

are given the respect due them. I believe our hospitals should honor the professional contributions of our nurses – and should do so, not just with words but actions. I believe every Kansas community should be supported with high-quality public services they depend on, and that a lean State government shouldn't be a mean State government. I believe that every worker, not just our Kansas public employees but all American workers, should have retirement security.

These are beliefs, and they are promises. But these promises are under attack by those who demand and pursue defunding schools and services, privatization, and the demonization of the contributions our work brings to our communities. We are faced with an opportunity

to reclaim these promises, and it begins now – with the 2014 Legislature. We have an opportunity to reclaim our state capitol and insist that our elected officials work for the citizens for whom they represent, rather than the corporations who fund their campaigns. We have an opportunity to raise our ideas at the Capitol – to help our members do their jobs better, to provide a vehicle for working in partnership with community on their issues, to help families build pathways to the middle class, and to protect the public good.

Together, we can advance the common good by insisting on support for public education, high-quality public services, and healthcare that benefit our families, strengthen our communities, and bolster our economy.

I hope you will join with me and commit to the struggle, and that together we can reclaim these promises.



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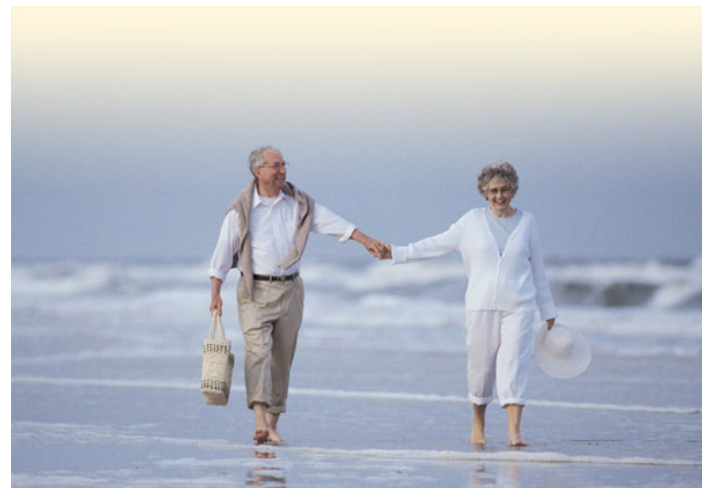
the truth of such plans is not nearly so sexy. What has become more and more evident in recent years is the reality that 401(k) style plans are a quagmire of too much risk, too little savings, and not enough benefits to sustain workers in their golden years. According to a study done by the West Virginia retirement system most teachers age 60 or older who participated in their 401(k) style plan had less than \$100,000 in their accounts, not nearly enough to retire.

Defined Contribution vs. Defined Benefit...Which Retirement Do You Want???

With the 2014 Kansas legislative session set to begin, yet another round of clamoring has begun to abandon state employee pension plans and replace them with a 401k style system. Before the political rhetoric gets thick with unintelligible numbers and hot with competition for the moral high ground, it is important for state employees to remember why their pensions are important to begin with.

Pensions, or “defined benefit” plans provide you with a long-term, stable, and dependable retirement you can plan around. You can buy a house, budget for your children’s college education, and even take that long dreamed of once-in-a-lifetime vacation secure in the knowledge that such family financial planning has a foreseeable end game: a comfortable retirement. The promise of such security for workers isn’t new fad or a fleeting ideal; it has been the cornerstone of our much envied American Dream for the better part a century.

In contrast, 401(K) or “defined contribution “ plans are the new kid on the block. While politicians try to tantalize state workers with promises that these plans provide short-term portability, tax breaks, and the potential for big time payoffs in the long-term,



Defined contribution is a lottery ticket promise tomorrow in exchange for the iron clad commitment of your hard work today. AFT will continue to fight this legislative session to make sure public employees get the dependable retirement compensation only pensions have been shown to provide.

Lets End Workplace Bullying Today!!!! (CONT'D)

The more KOSE knows about workplace bullying going on right here in Kansas, the more effective they can be in fighting to end it. If you have been a victim and would be willing to share your story, or know someone who is, please contact the Rebecca Proctor in the KOSE office at (785)354-1174 or at Rebecca.Proctor@koseunion.org

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We're Mobilizing!!!!

The AFT Public Employee Division conducts annual mobilization training for public employee leaders and staff from around the country. This year, the mobilization training will take place in Wichita March 8th-15th with the Kansas Organizations of State Employees (KOSE) and AFT Kansas.

Last year participants are coming from Alaska, North Dakota, Illinois, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Colorado, and Wisconsin and we expect a robust turnout again this year. Participants will work in teams with members of KOSE and AFT members to organize specific work locations. The program will focus on the issues facing state employees and includes both the art and science of organizing a worksite.

KUNA RALLYS FOR FAIR PAY!!!!



On December 16th several dozen nurses and supporters rallied on a sidewalk outside the University of Kansas Hospital to raise awareness for working conditions and patient care issues at risk in a new labor contract with the hospital. Fact-finding, the next step in this process, is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5th.



KOSE Election Results



The KOSE Nominations and Elections Committee is excited to announce the results officer and board member elections. There was a tie for the second unit 6 board position between Gerald Denison and Robert Percival. Thanks to everyone who voted!

Officers

President: Lisa Ochs

Vice President: Scott Towery

Secretary: Anita Lara

Treasurer: Majorie Riggan

Board Members

Unit 1: Mel Bollinger and Rick Wiley

Unit 2: Lynette Lewis

Unit 3: Mike Brogan, Lon Oberman, Irene Soto

Unit 4: No nominated unit 4 candidate

Unit 6: John Bates

Unit 16: No nominated unit 16 candidate

Uncertified: No nominated uncertified candidate

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