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State Lawmakers Wrap Up Yearly Session

(KAIR)--Kansas lawmakers ended their yearly session earlier this month, the shortest one in over forty years. While the final wrap up session was a short one, quite a bit of legislation was debated, passed, and sent to Governor Sam Brownback.

The last bill passed by both the House and Senate dealt with the state budget. Democratic State Representative Jerry Henry says that while there were some budget issues previously debated that had to be stopped due to a \$92-million revenue loss, the final proposed budget could do some good for a lot of Kansas residents. Money to the developmental disabilities waiting list will be increased, so approximately 100 to 150 people who have been waiting for those services will finally receive them.

School funding has been a hot topic during this session, and Henry says that even though legislators have complied with the State Supreme court's ruling to equalize funding to state schools, it may not be enough to help some school districts. He says that some are still talking about making some pretty big cuts to their budget. Some of their core functions will probably be maintained, but some individual programs are in danger of being cut.

The end of the mortgage registration fee also gained a lot of attention, with the fee set to be phased out over the next five years. Henry said that he voted against bill that would end a significant source of revenue for Kansas counties. He said that he did not agree with the phase out program that was agreed upon. Counties will still loose out on about \$18-million in revenue. In order to try and make up some of this lose, they will either have to cut some services or raise property taxes.

Henry was also happy to say that one of the best things to come out of the budget is a new, full time state Veteran's Affairs office that is set to open in Atchison in the next couple of months.

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