

“ THE PECK PERSPECTIVE ”

(From the Capitol)

May 7, 2022

No matter how much a person may try to avoid listening to or reading news reports, most have heard about the unprecedented leak of a US Supreme Court draft opinion in a case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, that could overturn two previous rulings by the Court regarding abortion. The *Dobbs* case involves a law passed by the Mississippi legislature in 2018 which bans abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

The two previous rulings that are subject to be overturned are the well-known 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade* and the lesser-known 1992 case, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Although I am solidly pro-life, and hope the Court overturns these two past rulings, I’ll not get too far into the abortion issue at this time. However, I will mention the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) recently released report, as required by law, that contains the preliminary abortion numbers in Kansas for 2021.

According to KDHE, the worst year in Kansas history for abortions was in 1999 when 12,449 abortions were reported being performed. From 1999 to 2016, there was a steady drop to a 28-year low of 6,820. The number of abortions in Kansas remained relatively steady until 2020 when they jumped to 7,546; a 9.1 percent increase over 2019. Then in 2021 the number increased to 7,849 (preliminary number); an increase of 4.2 percent over 2020 and 13.5 percent over 2019. During those two years, Kansas saw a significant increase in the number of mothers from other states coming to Kansas for an abortion – jumping from 3,373 in 2019 to 3,912 in 2021, a 16 percent increase.

Of the three counties in Senate District 15, the number of residents having an abortion was 11 each in Montgomery and Neosho counties, while Labette residents accounted for six of the abortions performed in Kansas.

Incentivizing More Housing in Kansas (HB 2237): In late April the Legislature passed HB 2237, a bill to enact the Kansas Housing Investor Tax Credit Act. HB 2237 was then signed by the Governor on May 5th.

The bill specifically states: *“The purpose of the Kansas Housing Investor Tax Credit Act is to bring housing investment dollars to communities that lack adequate housing. Development of suitable residential housing will complement economic development of rural and urban areas that lack adequate housing resources and enable such communities to attract business, employees and new residents.”*

I was very pleased with the passage of HB 2237 as it is designed to incentivize housing development in Kansas – especially rural Kansas. The intention of HB 2237 is to encourage renovation and construction of housing, preservation of historic structures and redevelopment of small-town buildings; which can be remodeled for

downtown housing. This is done through transferable tax credits and loan guarantees in the 98 lowest population counties in Kansas.

Starting in tax year 2023, the tax credits will be administered by the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation and the Kansas Development Finance Authority. The tax credits are capped at \$13 million per year and a qualified housing developer is limited to using the tax credits on 40 residential units per year.

Builders in counties with a population under 8,000 can receive up to \$35,000 per housing unit while those in counties with a population of 8,001 to 25,000 will have a cap of \$32,000 per unit. Finally, counties with a resident population from 25,001 to 75,000 will be limited to a tax credit of \$30,000 per unit.

HB 2237 includes separate tax credits of \$10 million per year for historic structures – rehabilitation of older buildings. Although the available tax credits are significant, the total of all incentives is expected to cost the State General Fund \$26 million in fiscal year 2023 and rise to \$44 million in FY '25.

The legislature is scheduled to return to Topeka on May 23rd for a day or maybe two; depending on any unfavorable court ruling regarding the redistricting maps passed earlier in the year. If you have thoughts or questions on issues we have, will or may deal with prior to final adjournment, please feel free to express them. My phone number is: 620-330-3839 and email is: virgil@virgil4senate.com.

Until next time, may the blessings of God be yours.

Virgil Peck
State Senator