

“ THE PECK PERSPECTIVE ”

(From the Capitol)

March 18, 2022

Thank You: I regularly receive expressions of gratitude from the many readers of these newsletters. Whether you receive it via email, see it on Facebook or read it in a newspaper, I thank you for your kind words.

Additionally, I want to say a big Thank You to the editors who publish the newsletter in their newspapers. I fully understand they have the freedom to choose what appears in their paper and I am grateful for those who are willing to provide space for me to communicate with constituents about some of the things going on in the Capitol.

Redrawing Legislative Boundaries: I’ve mentioned in previous writings that every 10 years, after the US census is complete, legislative boundaries must be adjusted/redrawn to account for population shifts. 2022 is one of those years. As a reminder, the legislature failed to fulfill its responsibility in 2012, causing the current legislative boundaries to be drawn by a court.

The perfect number for each State Senate District in Kansas is 73,447. After receiving input from individual senators, the Senate debated and passed SB 563 on a 28-8 bipartisan vote – with two passing and two absent – sending the bill to the House. Generally, the House will draw a map for their chamber and rubberstamp the Senate’s map, and vice-versa.

Almost everyone understands that it is nearly impossible to draw a map that will please everyone. As a Senator, my first responsibility is to focus on what I believe is good for Senate District 15 – and then the rest of the State. The map that passed the Senate, named *Liberty 3*, has a population in District 15 of 73,436 – a mere 11 short of the “perfect” number. I was pleased with the new boundaries set forth for District 15 in SB 563, as well as the rest of SEK, and voted yes.

The 2012 court-drawn map for Senate District 15 includes three SEK counties; all of Neosho County, most of Labette and Montgomery Counties. The *Liberty 3* map changes the boundaries and meets the request I made to include all of those three counties – adding Chetopa in Labette County and Elk City in Montgomery County – as well as bringing in two counties to the west, Chautauqua and Elk counties. Although no map will be a done deal until both chambers pass the same map, and the Governor signs the legislation, I feel rather positive that *Liberty 3* will be the new state senate boundaries.

Liberty 3 makes 92 counties whole – an increase from 82 in the 2012 map. Liberty 3 (SB 563), as well as other statistical information, can be viewed at the link below.

http://www.kslegresearch.org/KLRD-web/Publications/Redistricting/2022-Plans/Senate/Liberty_3_s.pdf

Protecting Young Ladies, SB 484: Every normal thinking person knows and agrees that it is blatantly unfair to female athletes when males are allowed to compete in female's sporting events. However, a sad reality is that some, including our current Kansas Governor, think it is acceptable to not only allow, but even encourage, girls' opportunities to be threatened by a radical ideology. These radicals would have the world believe that a person's natural born gender can be changed. Common sense, and medical science, reveals that is impossible.

In 2021, the Legislature overwhelmingly passed SB 55; a bill to provide protections for female athletes. Although SB 55 passed the Senate 26–11 and the House 76–43, it was vetoed by Governor Kelly and the Senate came one vote short of having the 27 votes necessary for a veto override.

The Senate will again take up the issue of keeping boys out of girls' sports, locker rooms and showers when we debate SB 484; scheduled for debate and vote this week.

SB 484 would create the *Fairness in Women's Sports Act*. Passage of the bill would require sports teams, sponsored by Kansas schools, to be expressly designated based on biological sex as males, men or boys; females, women or girls; or coed or mixed. Teams designated for females would be off limits to persons born male.

It was disappointing to learn some of the groups that testified in opposition to protecting young ladies in Kansas. They include: The ACLU-Kansas, Kansas Action for Children, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), The State Board of Education in Kansas and Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

I will be working for and supporting passage of SB 484. I believe our Kansas girls should be empowered and recognized for being strong women, instead of degraded and embarrassed.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator