

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE AND SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE.

The joint meeting was called to order by Senator Karin Brownlee at 8:30 a.m. on January 16, 2002 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All House members were present except: Rep. Rick Rehorn - excused

House Committee staff present: Jerry Donaldson, Legislative Research
Bob Nugent, Revisor of Statutes
Renaë Jeffries, Revisor of Statutes
Bev Adams, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary of KDHR
William Sanders, KDHR
Phil Harness, KDHR
Martha Gabehart, KDHR

Others attending: See attached list

The Business, Commerce and Labor Committee started the year of 2002 with a joint meeting with the Senate Commerce Committee in Room 123-S at 8:30 a.m. The meeting was called to order by the Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, Senator Karin Brownlee. Rep. Lane welcomed every one to the meeting and made a few comments.

Roger Aeschliman, Deputy Secretary of KDHR, reported that the unemployment figures for January would not be available until the end of February. The last unemployment figures were lower because of the Christmas shopping season and they do not show the Wichita and Sprint lay-offs. The January report, to be published in February, will show a more realistic figure for unemployment in Kansas. He introduced William Sanders, Chief Information Officer and Director of Employment Security, KDHR.

William Sanders reported on unemployment claim numbers. He explained how the filing of claims has evolved in the last few years from paper claims to Call Centers to a combination of Call Centers, internet, interactive voice response, and employers filing of claims on behalf of employees. The department has been able to increase their effectiveness of processing claims, using the same amount of employees, from 47 minutes per unit to 12 minutes per unit. Even with the increase in effectiveness, the major problem is people getting into the system to file their claims. This could be the 2nd worst year for unemployment filings. They are seeing a dramatic increase in numbers. They are working to replace the system with a more stable system that will not crash as often. (Attachment 1) Mr. Sanders answered questions from the committees.

Mr. Aeschliman introduced Phil Harness, Director of the Division of Workers Compensation.

Mr. Harness gave a quick overview of the many changes in his division. He updated the committee on its fraud and abuse monitoring and prosecution activities during the past year. The annual report will be available soon. A new database went on line on November 5, 2001, which will facilitate the gathering of data as required by statute. They will also be forwarding their third year results in their Annual Statistical Report soon. He also talked about the State Plan for safety and health programs. He will have proposed legislation to recommend to the legislature from the Advisory Council. (Attachment 2) He ended his testimony by answering several questions from the committees.

Martha Gabehart, Executive Director, made a short presentation about the Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns. At this time she does not know of any initiatives coming before the committees that have to do with the Americans with Disabilities Act. She included in her written testimony two recent Supreme Court cases that have had some impact on the ADA. (Attachment 3)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.