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FORMER LEGISLATORS TELL GOVERNOR, LEGISLATURE "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH" Traditional Republicans for Common Sense Launches

TOPEKA—Today, a group of 46 former traditional Republican legislators from across the state have joined forces to form Traditional Republicans for Common Sense. The group will advocate for common sense policy positions – like job creation, funding our schools and providing for common sense tax policy.

"As former legislators, with over 500 years of collective service to Kansas, we care deeply about what happens to our communities, our homes," said former Assistant Majority Leader and State Chair of the Republican Party Rep. Rochelle Chronister. "Unfortunately, deep-pocketed special interest groups are spending millions of dollars attempting to buy the 2012 elections and silence voters. We will not allow that to happen without a fight."

The Kansas Constitution says that every child has the right to a fair and equal education. And, it is the Legislature's first responsibility to ensure that the formula is adequately funded. As recently as December of 2010, the Legislature received the results of 2010 Commission's five-year study that stated the current finance formula was adequate, if properly funded.

"We've seen a number of gimmicks and stall tactics employed by some within the Legislative and Executive branches in an effort to shirk their responsibility or shift the blame for their inaction to the courts," said Chronister. "The reality is that over \$18,000 has been cut from every classroom, in every school across the state. Our communities, especially our rural communities, are hurting. When something is on fire, you don't add fuel. The Legislature's own commissions and reports say that the system is underfunded. Why are we still debating this? Every day that goes by is a lost opportunity to teach a student. We will not get this time back." The legislature's own Legislative Post Audit study in 2006 reported an almost 1 to 1 ratio showing that districts that spent more had better student performance.

Impacting the school finance formula is also the larger discussion about taxes. Governor Sam Brownback has introduced a tax plan that would sharply reduce income taxes, eliminate popular programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Home Mortgage Deduction and revoke religious and charitable organizations state tax-deductibility on donations.

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In Kansas, taxes are collected in three primary categories—property, sales and income. The “three-legged stool” provides a balanced approach and takes into account the unique economic and geographic challenges of our state. You cannot eliminate one leg of the stool without impacting the others.

“If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is,” said Chronister. “You don’t need an economist to tell you that if you virtually eliminate the income tax then you are going to see a sharp rise in property and sales taxes. Increased property taxes are exactly what Kansans *do not* need.”

According to January 2012 survey of Kansans administered by American Viewpoint, of 600 likely Republican voters distributed evenly among the four Congressional districts, found that:

Most important issue for the Governor and State Legislature to deal with: Creating new jobs and protecting existing jobs: 22%; Strengthening Kansas’ economy: 15%; Controlling state spending: 14%; Cutting taxes: 8%.

If the Governor and Legislature reduced or eliminated a tax, which one would you like to see reduced or eliminated? Property taxes: 45%; Income taxes: 27% and Sales taxes 16%.

With \$200 million+ budget surplus expected this year, what should the Governor and Legislature do with that surplus? Restore previous cuts to programs and services like education: 38%; Save a portion in a Rainy Day Fund: 35%; Cut taxes and further reduce government services/programs: 17%.

Chronister went on to say, “we have a moral obligation to the citizens of this state. If we want to ensure our long-term success then we cannot mortgage our children’s future. Every farmer will tell you that you reap what you sow. Our children’s future and the stability of our state are too important to gamble away with accounting tricks and the newest fad from a Washington, DC think tank.”

The founding members of Traditional Republicans for Common Sense include:

U.S. Sen. Sheila Frahm, Colby, Kan.
U.S. Rep. Jan Meyers, Overland Park, Kan.
Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, Overland Park, Kan.

Sen. Barbara Allen, Prairie Village, Kan.
Sen. Dick Bond, Overland Park, Kan.
Sen. David Corbin, Towanda, Kan.
Sen. Jane Eldredge, Lawrence, Kan.
Sen. Tim Emert, Independence, Kan.
Sen. Fred Kerr, Pratt, Kan.
Sen. Audrey Langworthy, Prairie Village, Kan.
Sen. Lana Oleen, Manhattan, Kan.
Sen. Alicia Salisbury, Topeka, Kan.
Sen. Carolyn Tillotson, Leavenworth, Kan.
Sen. Wint Winter, Jr., Ottawa, Kan.

Rep. Denise Apt, Iola, Kan.
Rep. Jayne Aylward, Salina, Kan.
Rep. Ginger Barr, Auburn, Kan.
Rep. Jim Braden, Clay Center, Kan.
Rep. Nancy Brown, Stanley, Kan.
Rep. Rochelle Chronister, Neodesha, Kan.
Rep. Steve Cloud, Lenexa, Kan.
Rep. Ray Cox, Bonner Springs, Kan.
Rep. Sandy Duncan, Wichita, Kan.
Rep. Cindy Empson, Independence, Kan.
Rep. Ron Fox, Prairie Village, Kan.
Rep. Bob Frey, Kansas City, Kan.
Rep. Fred Gatlin, Atwood, Kan.
Rep. John Golden, Goodland, Kan.

Rep. Rex Hoy, Fairway, Kan.
Rep. David Huff, Lenexa, Kan.
Rep. Dan Johnson, Hays, Kan.
Rep. Phil (Big Phil) Kline, Overland Park, Kan.
Rep. Wendell Lady, Overland Park, Kan.
Rep. Fred Lorentz, Fredonia, Kan.
Rep. Jim Lowther, Emporia, Kan.
Rep. Bill Light, Rolla, Kan.
Rep. R. D. Miller, Russell, Kan.
Rep. R. H Miller, Wellington, Kan.
Rep. Cindy Neighbor, Shawnee, Kan.

Rep. Gerry Ray, Overland Park, Kan.
Rep. Susan Roenbaugh, Lewis, Kan.
Rep. Ed Rolfs, Junction City, Kan.
Rep. Ellen Samuelson, Newton, Kan.
Rep. Lloyd Stone, Emporia, Kan.
Rep. Jim Yonally, Overland Park, Kan.
Rep. Lisa Benlon, overland Park, Kan.

Traditional Republicans for Common Sense will continue to add former legislators over the coming weeks and months. For more information about Traditional Republicans for Common Sense, please visit www.kscommonsense.com.

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