

Time to stay the course

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As election time nears, it appears there are two main issues emerging in the governor's race -- the Kansas economy and the funding of schools. It is difficult to explain these complex issues either in a 30-second ad or in a short letter such as this.

I have served as the chairman of the House taxation committee for the past six years, and I am retiring this year. So getting re-elected is not on my agenda. What is on my agenda and always has been is trying to position our great state for job growth so all our families can have the dignity of being able to provide economic security and stability in their lives. A good job with the opportunity to advance and grow is what we strive for, not more government welfare for families who cannot find jobs.

The lowering of income taxes for all Kansans leaves more money for you to spend as you see fit, not a socialized government sharing your wealth. The Kansas medium income is \$65,430, not exactly a tax cut for the rich. During the decade of Govs. Kathleen Sebelius and Mark Parkinson, there was zero job growth in the private sector. In the first three years of Brownback, there are more than 55,000 new jobs, and more Kansans are now working than in the history of Kansas. Government welfare is now one-half of what it was, because people have jobs. A low 4.9 percent unemployment rate doesn't have much of an emotional effect, but knowing you and your neighbors have jobs does have an effect.

There have been ads stating Brownback's plan isn't working after eight months of tax filings. Where were these critics when Kansas was not growing for 10 years? Our economic growth for the last eight months has exceeded Nebraska, Missouri and Oklahoma for the same time span. Where were the critics when Kansas was not growing as fast as those states for the past 10 years? New business formations are at an all-time high -- more jobs. We were so far behind our neighboring states, it will take awhile to catch up. Just keep in mind: Those who say the economic plan isn't working are the same ones who want higher taxes, more government control of your life, and they are the same ones who lobbied me for 10 years in the Legislature to constantly vote for spending more of your money.

Our state revenues are less than 1.7 percent short of projections made by the states Consensus Estimating Group, due mainly to the federal governments change in tax policy at the end of 2012. Typically through the years, the Consensus Estimating Group estimates are within a plus or minus 2 percent of actual revenues, and we are well within those historical numbers. In the first three months of fiscal 2015 year, the state has collected \$1.3 billion, just \$23 million short of estimates.

School funding -- the lobbyist for the Kansas Association of School Boards has stated, Brownback has invested more money in K-12 every year he has been governor. Of course our schools need to be funded, but they need to be efficient also in the spending of that money. We are now spending (including federal) more than \$13,000 per student. The only actual cut in state spending I am aware of was made by Parkinson during the first part of the recession. I believe Brownback has increased school funding approximately \$274 million. Never a cut. We did lose the temporary federal funding that the critics are stating, but it wasn't Brownback.

Kansas is known for its strong, independent people who believe less government is best, individual freedoms are important and our 2nd Amendment rights are paramount. There is only one team in the Governor's race who believe in and will protect those values.

I will be voting for Brownback and Jeff Colyer, the team who works for what is important to us, the people of Kansas.

Rep. Richard Carlson,

House Taxation Committee chairman, 61st District