

Moving forward

I started my political life as a 17-year-old working as a student McGovern chair in my high school. It was my first election loss. Since then, I've been involved in many elections. Some I've won; others I've lost.

When you've put up a hard fight for something you really believe in, it hurts to lose. So here's what I do the morning after an election. When I wake up, I walk the dogs. Then I make some coffee, put in my toast, and fire up the computer to look at the results. I take a nice hot shower after breakfast, get dressed, and go to work. The only difference between winning and losing is whether or not I sing in the shower.

This is not to imply that I am not upset after a loss. I am. It's natural. I'll bet the Royals were downhearted the morning after game 7 of the World Series. They played ball with heart and soul. They were all in; they fought hard. In the end they came up short. But I'll bet the next morning they weren't wondering what more they could have done or what could possibly have gone wrong. No. They ate breakfast and started thinking about 2015.

Yes, at some point they'll reflect on the series and consider what might help them over the finish line next season. I know what they won't do. They won't quit baseball.

A lot of Kansans woke up heartbroken on November 5. Fewer than 50% of Kansas voters had cast a ballot and fewer than 50% of them voted for the winner. This was a very close election and it leaves me with a couple of questions.

Why did more than half of Kansas voters not bother to cast a ballot?

Why is our Secretary of State not concerned that on November 3, he had 25,000 newly registered voters in limbo thanks to his crack down on voter fraud? ("As of noon Monday, the Kansas Secretary of State's office was reporting that the registration of some 25,000 voters remained incomplete due to inadequate identification."

<http://kcur.org/post/hot-races-down-ballot-amendments-affect-turnout-kansas-and-missouri>^[1])

Those are questions to think about as we head toward April school board elections and

then into the 2016 House and Senate elections

The immediate issues facing supporters of public schools and public school students is what will happen as Governor Brownback and his allies in the legislature "hit the accelerator" on their tax plans which have already devastated the state's revenue stream. One thing is clear - the state of Kansas cannot afford any more tax cuts. The ending balances of which Brownback has boasted, are gone. Revenues continue to drop and projections tell us that the state will sink ever deeper into fiscal ruin as time goes on

Brownback has vowed to protect public education (protect it at the level he has cut it to?). But, unlike the federal government, the state cannot deficit spend. Moving forward the legislature and Governor will have to make some very hard decisions. They have already cut agencies to the bone and into the bone! Social services, public safety, road and highway repair are all suffering. Public school funding cuts have not been restored since the recession

The Governor and his legislature have set the state on the road to disaster and will ultimately be left with no choice but to further dismantle public services. The expected losses in revenue cannot be realistically adjusted for without cutting K-12 and higher education. Unless they reverse course on their tax cut obsession, Kansas will suffer.

So we're in for a bumpy ride. The state is being governed by people who don't believe in government. If Kansans sit back and let them run roughshod over our schools, communities, and citizens, then the next generation of Kansans will suffer needlessly

Remember the Royals? When they were down did they stop swinging the bats? When the score looked bad, did Lorenzo Cain stop chasing down fly balls? Did Eric Hosmer shrug his shoulders and go sit in the dugout? Of course not. And neither should those of us who fought hard to protect our schools and children

Now is the time to redouble our efforts and hold the Governor and legislature accountable for their actions. They must not make a vote without wondering what they will face when they come home for the weekend. ACCOUNTABILITY! It's not just for teachers anymore!

We know that the work of teachers is honorable and that our cause is just. We know that every child deserves the best opportunities. We must demand that every Kansas child - from Johnson City to Johnson County - has access to a great public school staffed by the

best teachers

Join us in moving forward for our schools and our children.

And so it begins...

Brownback's tax plan loses the state \$1 billion over two years

Within a week of Brownback's re-election, word has come down that state revenue will drop by \$1 billion over this year and next.

The consensus revenue estimating group - a select group of economists, legislative research specialists and representatives of the governor's office - take a look at trends in the state revenue stream and release estimates upon which the budget by law must be based.

Yesterday, this group announced that revenue collections were so low that for this year, the state would have to spend its \$380 million ending balance and then cut another \$280 million from the budget just to get the zero. Next year they will be required to cut another \$435 million

The Kansas City Star reported

"Critics have long predicted that Brownback's income tax cuts would push the state into a financial crisis. Earlier this year, Wall Street warned that the state would need to make deep budget cuts to account for declining revenues brought on by the tax cuts.

Both Moody's Investors Services and Standard & Poor's cut the state's bond rating, alerting investors that the state was positioned to eat away critical reserve funds partly because of the income tax cuts. Without additional budget cuts, the state would be holding no money in reserve under the budget scenarios laid out Monday."

Click here to read the full article^[2].

Of course, if Governor Brownback keeps his campaign promise not to cut education, then the entire billion dollar cut would have to come from less than half of the state budget. That half includes public safety, roads and highways, and the social service safety net for Kansans with disabilities, seniors, and the poor. Taking that much money

out of those services would have a devastating effect on services. All of those programs have already been cut to the bone.

It is highly likely that Brownback will be considering cuts to education as well as other budget areas.

His legislative allies and budget director have expressed their intention to stick with the Governor's disastrous tax policies and support the scheduled further reductions in the income tax. This will only make matters worse

There is a possibility that Brownback will use his authority as Governor to enact cuts known as allotments between now and the start of the legislative session in January. He might also be able to wait until the early days of the session and let the legislature make the decisions. We'll be watching carefully.

In the meantime, run your red shirt through the laundry! It's going to get interesting!

Read more about this in the Lawrence Journal World^[3], the Wichita Eagle^[4], and the Topeka Capitol Journal^[5]. There is also an excellent editorial in the Star^[6].

1. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98c34eda28df3aa62ceecb29e5cc5d84ed45832047afd2a039074d441d1c15fbe5d>
2. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98cc878194dde7ab23cbb605f535eba952ee21ecb304c6f823b4497d1ef2f81e776>
3. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98c597027fc613b0eb159c44e50fbc5edb8c359208ef57035af7775d557c09939e>
4. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98c4a016311999eb52e9e878d0ed465ff1a09020d0756e1e0bf73ebc664e0b5cf89>
5. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98cc4662f8de4a1df646ad862b8fed779a2908dee746a62a3c6c06401173e1c485f>
6. <http://click.email.nea.org/?qs=de0897efd6a8b98c89ca4d40c2450024c499dd825e73a285ed8af47e532cd67decf7b9d8c9e94750>

