

A Call for Civility

The following is a message from Governor Mark Parkinson:

Two weeks ago, in my letter to legislators welcoming them back for the veto session, I wrote about Kansas' ability to rise above the partisan bickering seen in Washington and come together to solve real problems.

Today, the 88th day of a 90 day Session, I am disappointed to see that civility slipping away. The political games, divisive debates and entrenched gridlock of Washington have found their way to Topeka. And fanning the flames of partisanship is the Kansas Chamber of Commerce

This weekend, the president of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce was quoted as saying that by passing a one-cent sales tax to prevent further cuts to schools, Medicaid and safety-net services, the legislature has "catered to the needs of those at the government trough."

It is heartbreaking to think that somebody would equate the disabled, the elderly, school children, veterans, law enforcement and the poor to pigs at a trough.

Kansans who have been laid off in this recession and are humbly accepting unemployment benefits to put food on the table for their families, are not pigs at the trough.

Kansas mothers, fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, who depend on Medicaid to receive care in their final years, are not pigs at the trough.

Our children, who are given only one small window to receive a quality education and be productive members of our society, are not pigs at the trough.

Our law enforcement, corrections officers and emergency responders who keep our streets safe and seek justice for crime victims are not pigs at the trough.

The hurtful words of the Chamber are not reflective of the Kansas I know and love, and they are not acceptable in a time of crisis.

In my letter to legislators I wrote that "our days are limited but the possibilities for success are limitless." I still believe this. Let's reject the political threats and shameful insults of special interests, and instead, come together for the common good.

That's the Kansas I know.