

Schwab urges caution with third party voter outreach efforts

TOPEKA — Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab reminds Kansas residents to be cautious in participating in third party outreach efforts ahead of the Nov. 3 general election.

“It is not uncommon for third parties – political, activist and otherwise – to engage in voter outreach efforts in an election year,” said Secretary Schwab. “Although the intent is sincere, the information collected by third parties does not always meet the requirements laid out in state law, potentially resulting in an incomplete voter registration or mail ballot application.”

The Secretary of State’s Office has experienced an influx of calls and emails from Kansas residents

with questions after receiving third party mailers, phone calls and electronic communications. Schwab’s office strongly encourages voters to not provide sensitive personal identifying information to third party organizations or outlets. There is no guarantee that third parties will turn in voter information to local election offices to ensure the voter’s information is properly processed. Instead, Secretary Schwab recommends voters register to vote online through the Secretary of State’s website – sos.ks.gov or by contacting their local election office. Voters can also download an advance by mail ballot application online or through their local election office.

“Misinformation is prevalent in election years, particularly this year with the added component of COVID-19. To ensure voters receive accurate information, we encourage them to prepare for the election by registering to vote, updating their voter information or requesting an advance by mail ballot with their local election office or the Secretary of State’s office,” said Schwab.

State law requires voters to provide their driver’s license or photo identification number or a copy of a government issued ID with voter registration forms and advance by mail ballot applications. Signatures are also required for individuals registering to vote in Kansas and

for those who wish to request an advance by mail ballot for the 2020 general election.

ELECTION RESOURCES:

- Register to vote (online): <https://www.kdor.ks.gov/Apps/VoterReg/Default.aspx>
- Register to vote (paper): <https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/voterregistration.pdf>
- Register to vote (Espanol): <https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/Spanish/SpanishVoterReg.pdf>
- Advance by mail ballot application: <https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/AV1.pdf>
- Advance by mail ballot application (Espanol): [https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/Spanish/AV1%20\(Spanish\).pdf](https://www.sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/Spanish/AV1%20(Spanish).pdf)

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- Verify voter information: <https://myvoteinfo.voteks.org/voterview/>

GENERAL ELECTION DEADLINES

- Oct. 13 – Deadline to register to vote
- Oct. 14 – Advance voting by mail and in-person may begin
- Oct. 27 – Deadline for voters to apply for advance by mail ballots
- Nov. 2 – NOON deadline to advance vote in-person
- Nov. 3 – GENERAL ELECTION
- Nov. 6 – Deadline for receipt of advance ballots postmarked on or before election day

SOS awarded grants for CAC, domestic violence and sexual assault programs

TOPEKA — SOS, of Emporia, will receive three grants totaling \$343,574 to use for domestic violence and sexual assault programs and Children’s Advocacy Center.

The SOS funds are part of a total \$7.8 million in 2021 State General Fund (SCF) grants announced Monday by Governor Laura Kelly.

“COVID-19 has kept us in our homes more than usual, and for some households, this has worsened the forces of domestic violence and sexual assault,” Kelly said. “We have a responsibility to do all we can to protect vulnerable Kansans, and I am hopeful this grant money will provide sup-

port to those who need assistance and assurances of safety the most.”

SOS will receive \$240,377 in SGF Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault funds, which support the enhancement and expansion of sexual and domestic violence programs. The funds are used for support services, outreach, and training for community-based programs located in large and small communities across Kansas. These programs provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including emergency safe shelter, crisis helpline calls, crisis intervention, on-going counseling and support, and advocacy

to help victims and survivors increase safety for themselves and their families.

SOS will receive \$47,220 in SGF CAC awards, which are made to initiate, enhance, or expand children’s advocacy centers. The funding supports child-focused, community-oriented programs that coordinate investigation and intervention services for abused children by bringing together professionals and agencies in a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary model.

SOS will also receive \$55,977 from the Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grant program, which funds communi-

ty-based nonprofit domestic violence organizations, such as SOS. These organizations provide outreach, shelter, support groups, crisis intervention, advocacy in obtaining protection from abuse orders, court accompaniment, transportation, and prevention education in schools and communities.

The SGF grant funds can be used to leverage federal funds, including FVPSA funds, to help expand services and improve responses across the state. Without these funds, millions of federal dollars would not be available to help vulnerable families or to increase safety in communities.

County

Continued from Page 1

explained that some of the 12 inmates being kept in Anderson County cannot be held in the Coffey County Jail because they are co-defendants in felony cases. Coffey County also has one inmate at Osawatomie and one inmate in juvenile detention.

Bowie said Anderson County charges \$44 per day, which at that rate would cost Coffey County about \$16,000 per month. Anderson County has a 54-bed jail.

A number of inmates have significant bonds, the highest being \$350,000.

Bowie suggested commissioners engage in an ongoing dialogue about housing Coffey County prisoners, especially since an architect is working on options for the jail, sheriff’s office and court. Bowie said the public needs to be aware of the cost of a jail.

Sheriff Rogers said he is monitoring jail expenses closely; however, keeping expenses within the jail budget will be challenging due to housing so many inmates in other counties.

- Approved a county payroll notice for new hire Forrest Trae Gilbert, an IT technician in the sheriff’s office, classification TPB-1 wage \$21.52, effective Aug. 31. Sheriff Rogers said Tasha Rogers formerly served as IT technician in the sheriff’s department; however, she has returned to overseeing communications following a resignation, and her salary will be adjusted accordingly.
- Authorized the chairman to sign a real estate mortgage release, acknowledging satisfaction in full debt secured by Bobby M. Staten Jr. and Donna K. Staten, 407 Des Moines, Burlington.
- Authorized the chairman to sign one tax abatement to the county tax roll in the amount of \$1,234.10.
- Huginin recessed the meeting at 11:08 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. when commissioners reconvened to take a new board photo and to interview economic development director Candidate No. 2.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

AG, Kansas Hospital Association partner to combat human trafficking

TOPEKA — Attorney General Derek Schmidt has announced a new partnership with the Kansas Hospital Association to create an online toolkit for increased awareness within the health care community of human trafficking.

Schmidt said the goal of the partnership is to provide practical and effective tools to help all health care providers identify, interact and intervene in situations where human trafficking is suspected. Human trafficking is happening in both rural and urban areas of the state and men, women and children can be victims of both labor and sex trafficking. According to a 2014 study by the Global Cen-

turion Foundation, 88 percent of sex trafficking victims said they had contact with a medical provider while they were being trafficked.

“Health care providers are in a key position to identify and assist victims by providing support and services they need to leave their situation and start on their road to recovery,” Schmidt said. “I am grateful to the Kansas Hospital Association for their collaboration in this effort to help the health care system identify human trafficking victims.”

The partnership with the Kansas Hospital Association adds another source of support for trafficking victims across the state by equipping urban and rural health

care facilities and staff with victim-centered tools to recognize the issues associated with trafficking and to intervene. Schmidt’s office has also provided targeted training on red flags for health care providers and administrative personnel across the state.

“Reducing and preventing human trafficking has been a priority focus area for many hospitals across Kansas,” said Tom Bell, President and CEO of the Kansas Hospital Association. “KHA appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with Attorney General Derek Schmidt and our member hospitals to address this critical issue.”

The toolkit was developed over several months through

collaboration between the Kansas Hospital Association and the Office of Attorney General. Resources include research-based approaches to providing patient care, screening methodology and models for hospitals to develop policies and procedures for assisting human trafficking victims. The toolkit can be accessed at <https://www.khanet.org/CriticalIssues/QualityandPatientSafety/humantrafficking/>.

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world. More information about human trafficking is available on the attorney general’s website at <https://ag.ks.gov/humantrafficking>.

County Counselor

Bowie met with commissioners in two executive sessions. In the first 10-minute executive session, commissioners consulted with the county counselor to discuss potential litigation deemed privileged under the attorney-client relationship exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). In the second executive session, for 20 minutes, commissioners consulted with the county counselor for the purpose of legal advice pertaining to county policy pursuant to the attorney-client relationship exception to KOMA. No action occurred as a result of the executive sessions.

When commissioners met last Thursday to sign vouchers, apparently internet service was disrupted while commissioners were in executive session. IT Director Brad Scheibmeir said the internet connection was lost outside of the building. Bowie wanted it noted in Monday’s meeting in case there were any future concerns.

Thursday meeting

All five commissioners met Thursday, Aug. 27, to question and sign August warrants and vouchers. Commissioners also met in two executive sessions to discuss personal matters of non-elected personnel pursuant to the Kansas Open Meetings Act exception to protect the privacy rights of non-elected employees. The first executive session included Emergency Management Director Russel Stukey and the second executive session included only commissioners.

Commissioners will meet next at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the basement meeting room of the Coffey County Courthouse, one day later due to the Labor Day holiday. The agenda includes the county engineer’s weekly report at 9:05 a.m.

States’ authority to require sex offender registries affirmed

TOPEKA — A ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit has reaffirmed the authority of states to maintain sex offender registries to inform the public and rejected the claim that registries are a form of punishment, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said Monday.

The appellate ruling last week reversed a 2017 lower court decision striking down the Colorado sex offender registry as unconstitutional. The

case involved a claim brought by three individuals against the director of the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

“While the offender registry laws in the states differ, the appellate court recognized the sovereign state interests in these laws and applied a legal test that reaffirms the states’ ability to notify Kansans of this important public safety information,” Schmidt said. “We will remain diligent to protect the Kansas law from legal attacks.”

Kansas joined Oklahoma, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming in a brief arguing to the federal appellate court that Colorado’s sex offender registry laws serve a compelling state interest by informing the public and were not punitive in nature or excessive requirements. A three-judge panel of the 10th Circuit agreed, reversing the lower court ruling and upholding the state law as constitutional.

Schmidt said the ruling is significant because any fu-

ture challenge to the Kansas offender registry law would be governed by the precedent established by the 10th Circuit in the Colorado challenge.

The federal decision in *Milard v. Camper* is available at <https://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/opinions/17/17-1333.pdf>.

Schmidt’s office previously successfully defended the Kansas offender registration law in state court against challenges to its constitutionality.



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