



# K A N S A S

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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## **Governor's Column** **Kansas' future bright if we work together**

*The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius*

Last week, I was honored to go before the Legislature and the people of Kansas to deliver the annual State of the State address, which provides an opportunity to discuss where our state can go in the coming years.

During the past four years, we've made outstanding progress in a number of areas, namely strengthening our schools and expanding our economy.

I believe we must continue that progress, building upon the commitment we've made to K-12 schools by focusing on early learning and post-secondary education. Reaching children early helps them get ready to enter kindergarten, which helps them do better in school and in life.

Additionally, ensuring Kansas students have the opportunity to get education beyond high school – and making sure that education is relevant to the needs of the workplace – will help workers and businesses succeed.

This focus on a skilled workforce will help attract new jobs to Kansas, as will the tax relief I've proposed, such as exempting 16,000 small businesses from the franchise tax. Coupled with our initiatives to promote economic opportunity in rural areas, these efforts will spread prosperity throughout our state.

But that prosperity seems unreachable for the thousands of Kansans without health coverage. We must address the crisis in our health care system, which is why I've called on the Legislature to work with me, the Health Policy Authority, businesses and providers to set a course to universal coverage in our state.

I've also called on legislators to work with me and the state's utilities to set a new course when it comes to energy.

Our security and economy are harmed by our dependence on imported oil, and our current reliance on fossil fuels is causing dangerous changes to our climate. There's no reason Kansas

shouldn't lead the nation when it comes to wind energy, and we have outstanding opportunities to become a leader in biofuels production and energy efficiency, as well.

We can continue our progress in strengthening our schools and creating jobs, and we can seize new opportunities in health care and energy, only if we work together. United, there's nothing we can't achieve, and I look forward to working with you and with the representatives you've sent to Topeka to create a brighter future for all of us.

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