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Governor's Column: Opportunities abound, but only if legislators act

The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

As we all know, the biggest unanswered question facing our state is whether the Legislature will meet its responsibility to ensure every Kansas child has the opportunity to attend a good school.

But there are other opportunities before us, as well – opportunities to give Kansas families the tools they need to make the most of their own lives.

Back in January, I set out several common-sense ways we can make Kansans safer, healthier and more prosperous. So far, legislators have not taken advantage of these opportunities – but with your encouragement, there is still time for them to act.

The prosperity of our state – and of each Kansas family – depends on creating good jobs here at home. That's why I proposed eliminating the property tax on new business machinery and equipment to encourage businesses to invest in new technology and create new jobs.

This job creation tool has been moving forward, but uncertainty involving the Legislature's commitment to our schools is so far preventing it from being realized.

We also have the opportunity to make Kansans safer by cracking down on sex offenders, particularly those who prey on children. Legislators supported my call for electronic tracking of repeat child sex offenders, which I applaud, but they have yet to pass the tougher sentences I called for more than three months ago.

Additionally, we have an opportunity to help children grow up healthy by making sure every Kansas child from birth to age five has health insurance. Legislators, however, have so far chosen not to take action on behalf of Kansas kids.

Even the opportunity for Kansans to support our troops through a tax check-off to help military families in need has yet to pass the Legislature.

Clearly, there is unfinished business before our representatives and senators. When they return to Topeka later this month they will have the chance to take action. In the meantime, I hope you'll encourage them to take advantage of these opportunities to move our state forward.

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