

BACKGROUND

Kansas Silver Haired Legislature

Kansas is one of 24 states which have a Silver Haired Legislature. The State of Missouri pioneered the Silver Haired Legislature movement, holding their first session in 1973. For several years individuals and organizations promoted this program for Kansas. In 1975 the Office on Aging, which was the predecessor agency to the Department on Aging, seriously considered this program, but did not pursue it, opting for the establishment of an annual Governor's Conference on Aging.

The value of a Silver Haired Legislature, as demonstrated in the experience of other states, continued to impress many people in our state. This generated renewed interest. With efforts and leadership from the Kansas Citizen's Council on Aging (KCCA), the Kansas Coalition on Aging (KCOA), the State Advisory Council on Aging and the American Association of Retired Persons, Senate Concurrent Resolution 1649 was introduced and passed by the 1982 session of the Kansas Legislature. The resolution encouraged the development of an annual Silver Haired Legislature and allowed the chambers, meeting rooms and staff of the Legislature to be used by the Silver Haired Legislature and instructed the Silver Haired Legislature to submit recommendations formulated during its session to the Governor, the Kansas Legislature, and the Kansas Department on Aging. SCR 1649 is not a permanently binding resolution. Each year the Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC) must approve the use of the chambers, meeting rooms and staff by the Silver Haired Legislature. The LCC has approved the request of the Silver Haired Legislature for meeting space and staff support each year since its inception.

Following the action by the 1982 Kansas Legislature, individuals who had worked for this program met in early April of that year. This group contacted statewide organizations working in the field of programs for the aging, asking them to name and send a representative to serve on the steering committee. The steering committee met and elected officers and needed committees. The Silver Haired Legislature was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Kansas and non-profit status was granted by the Internal Revenue Service. Although no funds were available for the Silver Haired Legislature, the Steering Committee voted to move ahead in full faith and confidence that the first Kansas Silver Haired Legislature could be held October 11-13, 1983. The enthusiasm and support of older persons throughout the state has justified this decision.

Following the 1984 session, the Steering Committee became the Board of Directors of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature, Inc. The bylaws were amended to provide membership on the board of directors to 14 delegates to the Silver Haired Legislature (one from each planning and service area [PSA] and three elected leaders). The Silver Haired Legislature has continued to meet every year since that first session. This handbook provides information about the 21st Annual Session of the Silver Haired Legislature.

* * * This is the original Senate Resolution * * *
from the 1982 Legislative Session
supporting the Silver Haired Legislature

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1649

By Senators Norvell, Ehrlich, Allen, Angell, Arasmith, Bogina, Burke, Chandler, Chaney, Daniels, Doyen, Eldredge, Feliciaano, Francisco, Gaar, Gaines, Gannon, Harder, Hayden, Hein, Hess, Johnston, Karr, Kerr McCray, Meyers, Montgomery, Morris, Mulich, Parrish, Pomeroy, Rehorn, Reilly, Roitz, Steineger, Talkington, Thiessen, Vidricksen, Warren and Werts

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION supporting the development of an annual Silver Haired Legislature in Kansas; authorizing the use of Legislative chambers, meeting rooms and staff and requesting that recommendations of such legislature be submitted to the Governor, the Kansas Legislature and the Department on Aging.

WHEREAS, Older Kansans are the fastest growing segment of the population with the number of persons over age 75 in Kansas having increased 40% between 1970 and 1980; and

WHEREAS, Older Kansans need to be involved in the solutions that directly affect their lives; and

WHEREAS, Many older Kansans lack an understanding of the legislative process and the way in which the state policy is developed; and

WHEREAS, It is most desirable in problem solving to involve those closely related to the problems in order to ensure more effective, lasting solutions; and

WHEREAS, A Silver Haired Legislature is a model legislative session in which older Kansans are elected by their peers to meet at the State Capitol to initiate and debate policy alternatives to deal with the problems that affect them; and

WHEREAS, Silver Haired Legislatures have been used in other States to effectively inform elderly persons about the legislative process, to serve as a forum where the elderly can discuss aging policy issues, and to recommend solutions to the problems of older Kansans: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas, the House of Representatives concurring therein: That the Legislature of the State of Kansas supports the development of an annual Silver Haired Legislature in Kansas; and

Be it further resolved: That the Legislature of the State of Kansas encourage the funding of the Silver Haired Legislature by businesses, foundations, and private organizations; and

Be it further resolved: That the Legislature of the State of Kansas allow its chambers, meeting rooms and staff to be used by the Silver Haired Legislature at a time that does not interfere with the regular sessions of the Legislature or meetings of interim legislative committees; and

Be it further resolved: That recommendations formulated by the Silver Haired Legislature be submitted to the Governor of the State of Kansas, the Kansas Legislature and the Kansas Department on Aging at the close of the Silver Haired Model Legislative Session.

TESTIMONY OF

DON WOODARD

BILL PROPOSAL RURAL TRANSPORTATION

Madam Chair, members of the Committee. I am Don Woodard, representing the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature. We are asking for this committee to introduce as a committee bill, our SHL Bill 2909.

This proposed legislation would amend K.S.A 2012 Supp. 75-5034 by adding definitions for "rural transportation system" and "Nonurbanized area".

There has been a growing need for additional transportation in our State, particularly to be available in the rural areas. This situation has not been addressed in the past and our members feel very strongly regarding an improvement in this area.

Nearly every County in Kansas would have one or more areas which would qualify under these definitions—even some of the more populated counties which have smaller communities in their boundaries.

Also, we feel this legislation should not incur a fiscal note since it only adds another priority— one which recognizes a need not addressed thus far.