

ISSUE BRIEF

PTA Legislative Legacy

A Proud History and Legacy of Advocacy

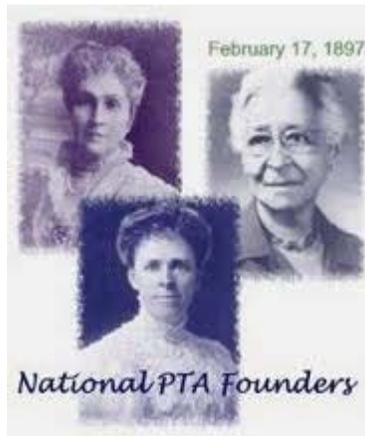
Excerpted from the
Minnesota PTA website

It was 1895 when Alice McLellan Birney asked herself....

“How can the mothers be educated and the nation made to recognize the supreme importance of the child?”

In 1895, Alice McLellan Birney expressed a deep concern for the miserable condition of children and families. Because she needed more than the ever present enthusiastic support of her family, she enlisted the help of Phoebe Apperson Hearst. Phoebe Hearst, who had become a school teacher at age 16 and later married into the affluent Hearst family, became the perfect partner for Alice Birney and her concerns for the plight of children. Together they shared a vision that would “create an unprecedented movement” of dedication and determination to create a better place for countless children.

On February 17, 1897, in Washington D.C., Alice Birney and her dedicated, friend Phoebe Apperson Hearst, realized their dream. It was the beginning of the National Congress of Mothers. This awakening of concerns for the welfare of children was being followed closely by Selena Sloan Butler, an elementary school teacher in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1911, with the assistance of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teachers Association, Selena Butler formed the first Colored Parent-Teacher organization at the Yonge Street Elementary school in Atlanta. Through her relentless hard work, the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers was formed in 1926. Selena Butler was elected the first National President. The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers did not unite with the National PTA until 1970 because of individual state segregation laws.



In 1958 the National PTA formally authorized the use of PTSA to encourage the participation of students as “full and equal members of their PTA or PTSA”, therefore affirming the value of student voices in decisions “affecting their education, health, and welfare”.

Today, as throughout our history, we welcome many new citizens of to our communities. PTA continues to value the rich culture children and families bring to our school communities. Although we may have diverse backgrounds, we share similar concerns for the education, health and welfare of our children. PTA recognizes that families may need special helps to assimilate into our school communities. Therefore, PTA will continue to advocate for every child with one voice.

“The PTA’s first century serves as a prologue to the challenges of the future. The next ten decades will be no less critical. The National PTA will be no less vigilant.”

As we continue the work of the dedicated individuals that began this honorable movement, many parallels in the efforts of parents in the 1800’s and the parent efforts of today become apparent. We still continue to advocate for children and families in many of the same areas of concern.

- Appropriate class size
 - This was an immediate concern of the National Congress.
- Promoting the teaching of the arts
 - In 1969 the National Reflections Arts Program was started by Mary Lou Anderson to showcase the importance of arts in education.
- Increased funding for public education
 - In 1905 the National Congress passed a landmark resolution calling for federal assistance for the education of children in kindergarten classes and elementary schools.

www.kansas-pta.org

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Kansas PTA Advocacy Team (2011).
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Links to full details below:
Excerpts from the Minnesota PTA website @ <http://mnpta.org/History.html>
History and Legacy from the National PTA website @ <http://pta.org/1164.asp>

ISSUE BRIEF

Kansas
PTA[®]

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How a Bill Becomes a Law

The Kansas legislature consists of two chambers — the House of Representatives (125 members) and the Senate (40 members). Each Kansan is represented by one member in each chamber. Legislators from both houses are referred to as members of Congress. Outlined below is the most basic route and timeline a bill would follow in order to become a law.

JAN - Introducing a Bill. Any member of Congress may introduce legislation. The bill is given a number according to the order and chamber it was introduced and then referred to a committee within the chamber of origin. For example, the tenth bill introduced by a state Senator on an issue related to school transportation would be assigned the number SB10 and would most likely be referred to the **Senate Standing Committee on Education**.

JAN - Committee Action. Committee chairpersons are assigned by the political party in power. Each committee has a chair, vice chair and ranking minority party member. The chairperson decides whether or not a bill will dead-end or be given a hearing or a “mark-up” for further action. The chairperson then decides whether to hold a vote to move the bill out of committee.

FEB - Floor Debate and Votes. Once a bill is voted out of committee, the next opportunity for action is an introduction to all members of its chamber of origin. In the House of Representatives, the speaker of the house determines if and when a bill will come before the full body for a vote. In the Senate, this is the function of the majority leader. Each chamber of the legislative branch has a different process for voting on and amending bills after they are introduced.

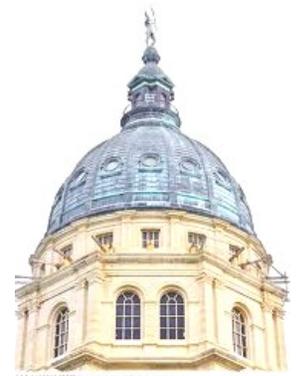
MARCH - Referral to the Other Chamber. After a bill has been passed by one chamber of Congress, it is then referred to the other chamber. Upon receiving a referred bill, the second chamber may consider the bill as it was received,

reject it, or amend it.

APRIL - Conference on a Bill. If the House and Senate versions of a bill vary after passing both chambers, a conference committee is created to reconcile the two different versions of the bill. If no agreement can be reached, the bill dies. If the conference committee is able to come to a consensus, both the House and Senate must pass the new version of the bill. If either chamber does not pass this version, the bill dies. Often, the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction will negotiate provision of non-controversial bills to avoid conference.

APRIL - Action by the Governor. After the final version of the bill is passed in both chambers of the legislature, it is sent to the Governor to be signed into law. The Governor can either pass the bill with a signature or veto the bill. Taking no action is referred to as a “pocket-veto”. The state legislature can override a veto with two-thirds of the roll call vote and change the bill into a law.

last week of APRIL - Veto Session. Both chambers of the Kansas legislature have the option to reconvene after the regular session to vote on any bills the Governor may have vetoed. Recently, this time has been used by the legislature to resolve major budget bills that should have been completed during the regular session.



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Excerpted from Kansas Action for Children and National PTA — links to full details below:
How a Bill Becomes a Law — PDF download from the National PTA website.
The Kansas legislative process— PDF download from the Kansas Advocacy Center.

HOW TO TIPS



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Calling Your Legislator

Make a Call

Contacting your legislator can be as straightforward as making a call. When timing is critical, phone calls are an effective way to let your legislator know whether you support or oppose a bill – especially if a key decision will occur within 72 hours.

The Kansas Legislative has a toll-free HOTLINE.

1-800-432-3924

The number is operational from January through May, during the legislative session.

Be Clear and Polite

If you want to brush up on basic facts, go to Legislative tab of the www.kansas-pta.org for information before making the call.

1. Introduce yourself and share your city and zip code, making clear you are a constituent.
2. Let your legislator know you are a PTA member. If you have any special credentials, state them. Just the fact that you're associated with a PTA is a credential, but you may have other qualifications to support your opinion.
3. Briefly state why you are calling, as congressional offices can be busy. Concise calls tend to be effective.
4. State the bill number of the issue of interest, if you are calling about pending legislation.
5. Avoid any personal attacks. Stay focused on the issue.
6. If calling a federal legislator understand that you will likely be speaking to an aide, not the legislator, but staff people and secretaries are important contacts as well.

Did you know...

Some calls take less than 5 minutes.

The phone is often answered by a secretary or staff member. Briefly introduce yourself. Indicate whether you support or oppose a particular bill or issue. Ask that your preference be noted and passed along to the elected official.

Thank the secretary or legislator for their consideration. Done!

Ask for Action

If your legislator supports the issue:

- Arm him/her with information supporting their position (this will help counteract opposing viewpoints).
- Give specific examples of the effect of the bill locally.
- Give your legislator encouragement to maintain support.
- Ask him/her to contact committee members, talk to undecided colleagues, or co-sponsor legislation.

If your legislator opposes the issue:

- Ask him/her to reconsider his/her position
- Give specific examples of the effects of the bill locally.
- Give information to support a positive position.
- Ask your legislator not to propose or support amendments that would hurt the bill's chances.
- Don't forget to thank them for taking the time to talk with you.

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HOW TO TIPS

Nonpartisan Parameters & Guidelines



Important to Know

While striving to fulfill the third Purpose of the PTA—“to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth,” it is important for PTA members to understand the nonpartisan IRS rules regarding non-profit organizations.

PTA is a 501(c)(3) organization with a tax-exempt public charity status.

Issues may become identified with partisan politics because of the differing approaches to the solution, but the basic principles involving the welfare of children and youth are matters of public concern and, therefore, PTA business.

General Guidelines

PTA May

It is acceptable for state and local PTAs to draft, petition for, or endorse ballot initiatives, legislation, or issue campaigns when they fit within the strict parameters of National PTA Resolutions and Position Statements.

As permissible under federal tax laws, PTA members may engage in legislative activities on behalf of children and youth and may educate the general public and policy makers about officially adopted PTA positions and resolutions.

As long as they remain strictly nonpartisan, PTA members may educate the general public about issues affecting children.

PTA is allowed to attempt to influence legislation through lobbying efforts.

PTA May NOT

To maintain charitable status, PTA organizations may not campaign for or against candidates for federal, state, or local public office. Specific rules also apply to the association’s lobbying activities and the amount of money that may be allotted to these lobbying activities.

PTA is constrained by the amount of money that can be spent on lobbying efforts.

Candidates – NONPARTISAN Rules

PTA may NOT

- Endorse or campaign on behalf of or against any candidate or political party.
- Tell members to only vote for a candidate who supports X position
- Invite only one candidate in an election to come speak to the PTA
- Distribute any campaign materials on behalf of a candidate.
- Wear campaign buttons or t-shirts during a PTA meeting.
- Even though an organization can express an opinion about an elected official’s position on an issue, avoid doing so during a campaign. Do not ask a candidate to publicly endorse any issue.
- While regular members and board members can support or oppose candidates as private citizens, they must not associate their political activity with PTA.

PTA may

- Advocate for the adoption or rejection of legislation-- take a stand on an issue and principles if supported by an adopted resolution or position statement.
- Contact or urge the public to contact legislators for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation.
- Register Voters. Volunteers must register all eligible voters regardless of party affiliation or political views.
- Remind members to vote.
- Educate candidates on issues important to PTA.
- Publish a candidates’ questionnaire. All candidates must be given the opportunity to answer the questionnaire and responses must be printed exactly as written.
- Lobby to influence legislation, as permissible under federal tax laws.
- Invite your legislators to visit your schools, but it is best not to do so during an election campaign if they are running for reelection.

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Candidate Forums – NONPARTISAN rules

The IRS can penalize tax-exempt organizations that host a forum that favors or opposes any candidate.

Guidelines:

- Invite ALL candidates registered with the secretary of state (or other elections certifying body) and vying for an elective position.
- Any debate must have at least two opposing candidates. If only one candidate will be appearing, you should cancel the forum.
- Inform the candidates about the presentation format.
- In all communications, such as the publicity of the event or the introductions, you should emphasize the nonpartisan nature of the event and the nonpartisan method used to qualify candidates for inclusion in the event.
- All candidates do not have to attend for the forum to meet IRS rules, but all candidates must be offered the chance to attend. The IRS can penalize tax-exempt organizations that host a forum that favors or opposes any candidate.
- PTA Board members and event organizers should not wear campaign buttons or otherwise endorse a candidate at the organization's event.
- Allow all candidates equal time to respond to questions.
- Do not declare a "winner."

Expenditures – NONPARTISAN rules

Your local unit may lobby on issues, if supported by an adopted resolution or position statement, though be advised your unit should spend NOT more than 5% of your annual budget on lobbying efforts.

From Money Matters, National PTA's publication: "Under the substantial part test (which most PTA's use), in order for a PTA to be recognized as being tax-exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) and to receive tax-deductible contributions, it may not devote more than an *insubstantial* part of its activities (generally interpreted as not exceeding 5% of gross income) to influence legislation." PTA's need to report expenses spent on lobbying on their Federal tax form—the 990 that they file in November.

Kansas Ethics Commission is the source for Kansas guidelines: http://www.kansas.gov/ethics/Lobbying/Rules_&_Regulations/index.html

School Resources or School Employees – NONPARTISAN rules

Since taxpayer dollars are used to purchase school supplies and to pay the salaries of school employees, any use of school resources or of school employee time could result in an ethics charge being filed against the school system or a school employee.

PTAs are private organizations, and as such are not so restricted. However, PTAs must take all necessary precautions to ensure their actions do not inadvertently cause problems for the school system or a school employee.

(continued) School Resources or School Employees

Guidelines:

- Maintain a mailing list of PTA members, and mail campaign materials (including newsletters if they contain promotional material) directly to PTA members. Do not use a school-supplied mailing list. Do not send campaign material home with students.
- Copy all campaign material off school premises. Do not use school copiers.
- If the PTA website is sponsored by the school, don't put campaign materials on the website. If the PTA website is independent of the school, then campaign materials may be put on the website. It is okay for the school's website to link to the PTA website.
- Distribute campaign material during PTA meetings. If the school system has a policy allowing private organizations to use the buildings, the PTA meeting is a private meeting and distribution of materials does not violate the law.
- Distribution of educational material (non-promotional) using school resources is NOT a violation of the law. For example, you can send home a flyer with students urging parents to vote in the upcoming referendum; however, you may not urge them to vote "YES" unless you mail the flyer using the PTA's distribution.

Ballot Issues – NONPARTISAN rules

PTA may take a stand on a ballot measure or a local levy, if supported by an adopted resolution or position statement.

- It is considered direct lobbying because the voters are the decision makers. It is important to remember that working on a ballot measure will count as lobby activities and is subject to IRS non-profit lobbying rules.
- Information about resolutions is available at the National PTA website: http://www.pta.org/ia_category_details_1141755338062.html

Political Action Committees – NONPARTISAN rules

PTA may NOT contribute to a political action committee (PAC) whose whole purpose is to influence the election of any individual to public office.

PTA may support a PAC that takes a position on a ballot issue (such as for a zoning or constitutional matter, school levy, or statewide referendum). However, the PTA must be absolutely certain that the PAC it supports is strictly issue-oriented and does not support or oppose any candidate or party.

www.kansas-pta.org

More information about what PTAs can and can't do to maintain their nonpartisanship status:

Alliance for Justice Non-profit Advocacy Resources <http://www.allianceforjustice.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/resources-and-publications/>

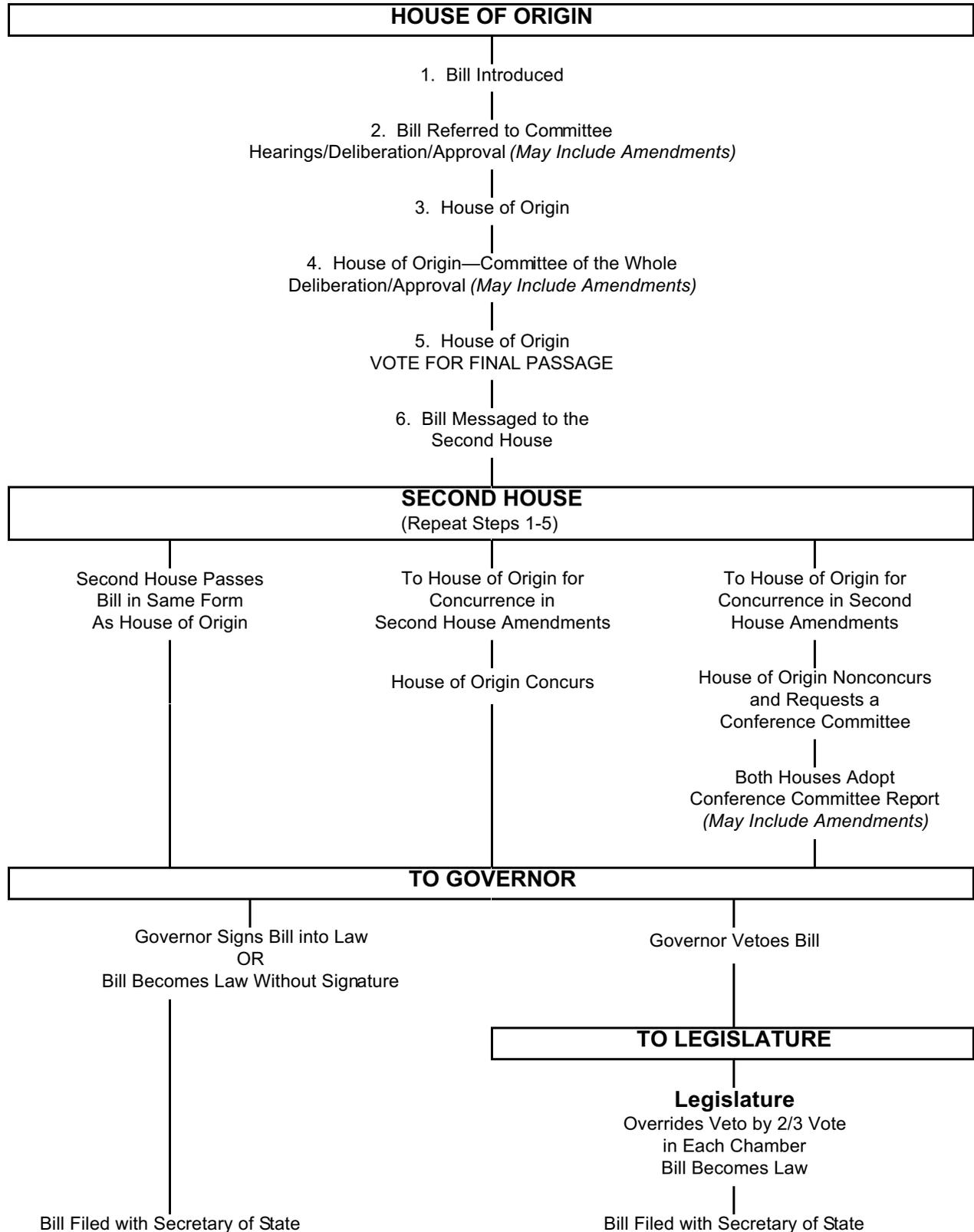
Center for Non-profit Management <http://www.cnmsocal.org/ForNonprofits/FAQLobbying.html#3>

Internal Revenue Service <http://www.irs.gov/index.html>

Kansas Ethics Commission http://www.kansas.gov/ethics/Lobbying/Rules_&_Regulations/index.html

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

The Kansas Legislature consists of Two Houses—The House of Representatives (125 members) and the Senate (40 members). A bill may be introduced in either house. The main steps in the process of a bill becoming a law are shown below.



RESOLUTIONS

**HOW TO WRITE
A RESOLUTIONS**



HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION: A formal expression of the opinion or will of a group adopted by a vote.

A resolution is an original main motion that, because of its importance, length or complexity, is submitted in writing.

A resolution usually consists of two main parts:

1. A preamble--the "whereas" clause(s).
2. A request for action--the "resolved" clause(s).

The "whereas" clauses contain the background information and the reasons for the resolution.

The "resolved" clauses contain the requests for action. This is the main motion. Each action requested should have its own "resolved" clause.

A resolution should avoid periods, if possible, but -sometimes they are grammatically necessary. The last paragraph ONLY should end with a period.

Following is a sample resolution, showing the correct structure, punctuation, and form. For additional information and help, refer to the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Whereas,	The Kansas PTA will meet for convention in April in Some City; and
Whereas,	That portion of a resolution comprising the phrases starting with the word, "Whereas" is known as the preamble of the resolution; and
Whereas,	The preamble includes statements of fact or background relating to the reasons for the action proposed in the "Resolved" clauses or information that is not common knowledge or that may be overlooked if not stated; and
Whereas,	The action taken on a resolution is action only on the motion contained in the "Resolved" clauses; now therefore be it
Resolved,	That any resolutions that are proposed for consideration by convention delegates be received in the State Office no later than January 2 nd prior to the convention; and be it further
Resolved,	That it be directed that resolutions submitted to the Kansas PTA for consideration shall follow this sample resolution in structure, punctuation, and form; and be it further
Resolved,	That such resolutions meeting all established criteria be presented to convention delegates for consideration at said convention.

A resolution shall originate only from local units and councils of the Kansas PTA in good standing or the Kansas PTA Board of Managers. In each case, **the president and the secretary of the originating group must sign the suggested resolution.**

Background materials should substantiate each "whereas" and "resolved" clause of the resolution and should indicate that the subject of the resolution was well researched by the submitting group. It should include PTA related information such as statements or policies; copies of documented research; copies of pertinent laws, surveys or statistics documenting the problem; and copies of relevant pamphlets or articles from publications. Newspaper editorials or articles alone are not adequate documentation. The background material must be sufficient to give a person with no previous knowledge of the subject enough information to make an intelligent decision. This requires that unbiased, well-balanced information be included.

To qualify for consideration by the Kansas PTA Resolutions Committee, resolutions shall meet the following criteria:

- a. Concern the program of the National and State PTA;
- b. Be in harmony with the National Objects and basic policies, noncommercial, nonsectarian, nonpartisan.
- c. Concern a matter that is statewide in scope, not merely local, and requires statewide action for a solution;
- d. State a position not previously adopted by the Kansas PTA;
- e. Be written in language appropriate for state consideration; i.e., "Be it resolved that the Kansas PTA shall ... "
- f. Be accompanied by ample supporting documentation that is statewide in scope.

When resolutions are adopted, the Kansas PTA follows through by working to accomplish the directive.

Resolutions must be sent to the State PTA Office and postmarked by January 2nd prior to convention. The Resolutions Committee will meet prior to the February Board of Managers meeting. Approved resolutions will be forwarded to units via the Convention packet so PTA members are apprised of resolutions that will be considered at the convention.

Please see the Resolutions Handbook also included in the Summer Packet for further information on Resolutions.

Mail resolutions with attached cover letter signed by the president and secretary to:

Kansas PTA
Attn: Resolutions Committee Chair
715 SW Tenth Street
Topeka, KS 66612

COVER LETTER FOR RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TITLE:

ORIGINATING GROUP: Unit _____ Council _____

Name of Unit/Council:

Please give name of person to contact if Kansas PTA Resolutions Committee wishes to get in touch with the originating group:

Name: _____

Address: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

DAYTIME PHONE: _____ **EVENING PHONE:** _____

EMAIL: _____

CHECKLIST:

Is the proposed action in accordance with PTA Objects and Policies?

Is the proposed action related to education, health, safety or welfare of children and youth?

Is SUFFICIENT supporting documentation attached including background data, table of contents, reference sheet and are the pages numbered consecutively?

Is the resolution clearly and concisely written and without grammatical errors?

Signature of President:

Signature of Secretary:

Date of Resolution Submittal:
