



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### ***Echo Van Meteren proposes legislation to boost take-home pay for teachers, corrections officers***

**LANSING** -- Echo Van Meteren, Candidate for Kansas Senate in the 3rd District, announced her intention to introduce legislation to increase the take-home pay of teachers and correctional officers in the state of Kansas.

*"As I've talked with constituents, it has become clear that Kansans are concerned about two things above all else in this election: education and public safety. Regarding education, there is a growing concern that our teachers aren't being adequately compensated for the important jobs they have to do and the roles they play in shaping our children's lives. That needs to change. As to public safety, few Kansans realize that a correctional officer starts out at just \$13.68 per hour and the average hourly wage for prison guards in our state is just two dollars higher. For barely more than some earn working in foodservice, they are locked behind bars every day with violent, aggressive, and abusive criminals.*

*The men and women engaged in teaching our children and keeping violent criminals off our streets need to be shown that they are valued members of our community by increasing their take-home pay, and doing so now. Many lawmakers have searched for a way to do that but have been hampered by budgetary challenges, bureaucratic obstacles, and political games and gridlock.*

*I am happy to announce that I have a plan that can overcome these hurdles, can be implemented nearly immediately, requires no approval or involvement by administrators, school boards, unions, or corrections supervisors and should be enthusiastically supported by conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans, lawmakers and the Governor alike.*

*Upon election, I intend to pre-file a bill to eliminate the state income tax entirely on full-time teachers and correctional officers in Kansas. When passed, this bill will result in an immediate increase in take-home pay for these important public servants.*

*There is a famous quote that says, 'If you want less of something, tax it.' The opposite is also true. Small business owners have already been granted this benefit and it has resulted in a record number of business filings in Kansas. Why can we not extend the same benefit to teachers and corrections officers? If we*

*(continued)*

*want more high quality teachers and if we want to attract and retain strong, qualified corrections personnel to our state, we need to eliminate the income tax on both of these important professions.*

*To those who fear what fiscal impact this plan might have on the state's overall budget, I've already had the Kansas Legislative Research Department investigate that question and they found that the impact will be slight.*

*Removing roughly 37,500 full-time K-12 teachers and 3,700 corrections officers from the state's income tax rolls will have an impact of less than 1% of the state's general fund budget and less than 0.5% on the state's all-funds budget. Given that our state budget has been growing at a rate far out-pacing inflation and given that total state spending stands at record levels, I believe we have ample room in our budget to grant this benefit to our teachers and corrections officers.*

*Given that the impact of this proposal will be to increase the take-home pay of teachers and corrections officers, employees whose compensation is provided largely by the state, the fiscal impact will largely be a wash. Factoring in the increased investing and buying power of those roughly 40,000 people only further affirms that the impact of this proposal on the state budget will be very slight, if noticeable at all.*

*But while the impact on the state's \$15 billion budget will be barely felt, the impact on the daily lives of teachers and corrections officers will be substantial and immediate. We can do this. We should do this.*

*My goal in running for the Kansas Senate is to get beyond the rivalries, scorekeeping, and toxic politics that have been choking out real progress in Topeka and come together to actually solve problems. This proposal is, I hope, just a downpayment on a new approach to solving problems in Topeka with creativity, collegiality, and respect."*

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**Video Available At:**

**<http://www.echoforkansas.com/press/>**

**Press-Quality Photos Available At:**

**[www.echoforkansas.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/EchoVanMeteren1.jpg](http://www.echoforkansas.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/EchoVanMeteren1.jpg)**

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