

## News Articles/Positions

**In January 2023, Stacey Knoell testified in the Legislature in favor of HB2028, which would expunge certain criminal records.**

Landon State Office Building  
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 100  
Topeka, KS 66612

  
Office of the Governor  
*African American Affairs Commission*

Office: (785) 296-1903  
Cell: (785) 220-8003  
kaaac.ks.gov

Stacey B. Knoell, Executive Director

Laura Kelly, Governor

HB2028.Stacey Knoell.1\_25\_2023.Pro

My name is Stacey Knoell, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission. Today, we are lending our support to HB2028 which would allow for the automatic expungement of certain criminal records.

Having a criminal record is a stumbling block at best and a barrier at worst for many people who seek to live their lives to their fullest potential. Not everyone has the resources or background knowledge to pursue a manual expungement of their records. That is why the most encouraging aspect of the bill we have before us today is that for many, the expungement process would be automated. This is a chance for the system to take care of those impacted rather than placing the burden on the individuals. Automatic expungement then frees those individuals to receive housing, employment, or loans without fear of their past being a hindrance to their future.

There is a strong economic argument to make concerning expungement. A clean criminal record allows people to enter the workforce and earn a higher income which gives them more spending power. Economic arguments aside, expungement of low-level crimes where the person has shown little evidence of being a repeat offender is the right thing to do. We could ask how this will impact the economy, but a better question is how this will impact the quality of life for Kansans. Are we treating this segment of the population with dignity and how we would like to be treated in return?

One provision to consider as the discussion moves forward is how fees continue to show up in the expungement process. Not all crimes are candidates for expungement, nor should they be. However, when expungement is not automatic, placing a burden of additional fines and fees, from \$10 - \$176 on the cleared person may mean that some people who deserve to have their records wiped will not do so because they cannot afford it. Such fines and fees seem to say that freedom in America only comes to those with monetary means. We would encourage the reduction or removal of such fines and fees from the process of clearing the name of a person who deserves a clean slate.

Given the history of how bills like this have stalled at various stages, we encourage the committee to work on this bill and move it to a vote on the floor. This is the legislative session to show that Kansas is a place where one can truly start over and improve their life no matter their background.

**(Source:**

[https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023\\_24/committees/ctte\\_h\\_jud\\_1/documents/testimony/20230125\\_15.pdf](https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_h_jud_1/documents/testimony/20230125_15.pdf))

**This legislation was also backed by the Kansas ACLU.**



Kansas

PO Box 917  
Mission, KS 66201

(913) 490-4100

[aclukansas.org](http://aclukansas.org)

## HB 2028 Proponent Testimony – Written Only

**Aileen Berquist, Policy Director**  
**American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas**

**House Judiciary Committee**  
**Wednesday, 1/25, 3:30 PM, Rm 582-N**

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Committee Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Aileen Berquist and I am the Policy Director for the ACLU of Kansas. We are a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that works to preserve and strengthen the civil rights and liberties of every person in Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today.

The ACLU of Kansas supports HB 2028, requiring criminal records to be automatically expunged in cases of acquittal or dismissal. A criminal record of any kind impacts your life long after charges are dismissed. These impacts, outlined below, constrain individual's ability to fully engage in our society, undermining our country's strongly held constitutional value of liberty.

(Source: <https://www.aclukansas.org/en/legislation/support-hb-2028-automatic-expungement-criminal-records-acquittal-or-dismissal>)

**This bill would include expunging the criminal records of people committed (but were not convicted) of committing theft, violent crimes and property crimes. (Would be good to have a lawyer verify this claim before we use it)**

(Source: <https://legiscan.com/KS/text/HB2028/2023>)

### **In 2020, Stacey Knoell participated and spoke in a Black Lives Matter rally.**

*Linnaia McKenzie stood in front of a couple of hundred demonstrators in Overland Park Saturday and explained that she loved the city and wanted to "see the community display a mutual love" for her.*

*McKenzie, a founding member of the Advocacy and Awareness Group of Johnson County, was the primary organizer of a march and rally supporting the Black Lives Matter movement in Downtown Overland Park.*

*Protesters started at Overland Park City Hall at 8500 Santa Fe Drive and marched to the Overland Park Clock Tower Plaza, where activists and community leaders spoke. It is one of many demonstrations nationwide proclaiming that Black Lives Matter following the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer last month.*

*The point of the march, McKenzie said, was to begin a community discussion about systemic racism and show Johnson County residents that a Black Lives Matter protest could be peaceful.*

*"We are coming today to show support to the Black community -- to show that we see them, that we hear them, that we love them," McKenzie said.*

*"The assumption is that our community members that live in the suburbs feel that any movement in support of Black Lives Matter or anything that supports the Black community is going to result in violence ... we're going to disband that belief."*

*Speakers at the march included McKenzie, Rep. Sharice Davids, Overland Park Police Chief Frank Donchez, Wyandotte District Attorney Mark Dupree, President of the Johnson County NAACP Fred Jones, child welfare advocate Shanelle Dupree, Kansas state senate candidate **Stacey Knoell** and lead pastor at The Freedom Center Christopher Madden.*

*Demonstrators sang, showing joy and solidarity over the size and diversity of the group. Many families arrived with children, saying they wanted their kids to experience the movement.*

*Although protests have been ongoing in larger cities for weeks, demonstrators said the topic of systemic racism is just as relevant in the suburbs.*

*Broderick Nelson, a 21-year-old who moved from Kansas City to Johnson County six years ago, said he experienced a culture shock when he arrived in Johnson County and saw the lack of racial diversity.*

*Nelson, who is Black, said he was singled out at school and was met with suspicion by administrators because of the color of his skin.*

*"I've never felt at home here," he said. "It shouldn't be like that."*

*Bianca Waage, an Overland Park 29-year-old who came to the march with her two young daughters, said she came to take in the support and show her daughters "how to peacefully fight back."*

*She said she was the only Black girl around where she grew up in the suburbs. She said protests in suburban communities are important.*

*"In a world of knowledge, it's a choice to be ignorant," she said.*

*Speakers at the rally urged demonstrators to take action to change the systems in place through voting, running for office themselves and supporting those already in office.*

*They discussed the national movement calling for an end to police brutality and systemic racism, and they detailed some steps local communities can take to fight implicit biases.*

*Wyandotte DA speaks on justice*

*Dupree said he chose to speak at Saturday's event because "any issue in Johnson County is an issue in Wyandotte County.*

*"I'm here to make sure that we all know that we have to come together. It doesn't matter the county, it doesn't matter the race," he said in an interview before addressing the crowd. "It's about making sure that we're all in the fight for true justice for everyone."*

*Dupree spoke to the crowd about his efforts to build accountability measures in Wyandotte County, as well as his own experiences with racial discrimination. He complimented the crowd size, saying that for years he felt he was alone in the fight for racial justice in the area.*

*When he was 19, Dupree said, six police officers "who refused to have a conversation" beat him with their batons. He did not elaborate on what led to the situation but said he spent three days in jail following the interaction.*

*Those officers, Dupree said, were not fired from the department they worked for.*

*He cited the incident as a reason for accountability in the justice system. When bad officers are not held accountable, he said, "the good ones never get the publicity they deserve."*

*Overland Park Police Chief Frank Donchez spoke immediately following Dupree. He referenced his refusal to tolerate racist behavior from officers and the department's relationship with the county's NAACP chapter.*

*Though the event did not focus on calling for change in police departments, before his speech Donchez said he was open to conversations about reallocating resources and responsibilities from police departments to social services.*

*"There's no doubt that change needs to take place," he said. "The amount of things that have been added to a police officer's duty in those last 41 years are incredible. I don't think we can ask the police to do everything." (Source: The Kansas City Star, June 20, 2020)*

## **During COVID, Knoell praised mask wearing and social distancing.**

*Should the COVID-19 pandemic continue into 2021, what would your top priority be?*

*Given where we are now, I think we are at a place where we need to continue to stress mask wearing, social distancing and good hand washing so that we can open the economy/schools/social life safely. We cannot have one without the other.*

**(Source: <https://klcjournal.com/kansas-senate9/>)**

## **Knoell spoke out in favor of young people getting the COVID vaccine.**

*TOPEKA, Kan. — Kansas Governor Laura Kelly is backing the CDC's updated guidance for people who are fully vaccinated.*

*In a news conference on Wednesday, the governor announced that anyone entering state buildings will be required to wear a mask starting Monday, as coronavirus cases increase and the Delta variant surges.*

*"Low vaccine rates have allowed the twice as contagious Delta variant to spread like wildfire," Gov. Kelly said.*

*The governor's advice signals that of earlier pandemic days, where widespread mask mandates were in place.*

*Under the new guidance, in most cases, each county will be able to decide on the parameters under which safety measures are enforced. However, the governor decided to exercise her jurisdiction over state offices and buildings, falling in line with CDC guidelines.*

*State health secretary Dr. Lee Norman said while severe cases seem to be trending downward, hospitalizations are still on the rise.*

*"In terms of the percent of the cases that end up having to be hospitalized or die are down 70%, but hospitalizations are up and hospitals are really getting quite full," Norman said.*

*The new CDC guidance calls for a mask to, once again, be the solution to slow the spread. Not just for those who don't have their shots, but also for those who do. Even people who are fully vaccinated are now encouraged to wear masks indoors where cases are on the rise.*

*Most hotspots have been identified in the eastern half of Kansas. According to state officials, several spots experiencing sustained case rates and +20% growth include Douglas County, Leavenworth County, and Shawnee County.*

*The state has struggled to significantly boost its vaccination rate, as fewer people opt to get vaccinated.*

*The Governor's Vaccine Equity Task Force met Wednesday afternoon, pointing to low numbers for the state's vaccinated population. So far, state officials said 44.9% of people in the state are fully vaccinated. The concern for vaccinations grows among children ages 12 and older, as the state's vaccination rate for that group sits at 34%.*

*Members of the task forced new initiatives and events, targeting that specific population, to increase vaccinations.*

*"In terms of having the youth be involved in planning their own events, to have them sort of being the lead on these events, I think that will go a long way towards having other youth feel more comfortable getting the vaccine," said Stacey Knoell, Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission.*

*The state's also been ramping up efforts to get shots into more arms, setting up mobile clinics that offer free vaccines and testing in different parts of the state.*

*As kids return to school, the state's mission to bolster their efforts has become more prevalent. Kelly said her administration also plans to release new guidance for schools in the coming days. In the meantime, she encouraged all people that are eligible to get vaccinated.*

*"We have a vaccine to protect us from the virus, that is safe, it's effective and it's free," she said.*

**(Source: FOX - 4 WDAF, July 28, 2021)**

## **Knoell called for DEI to be a priority for the Olathe School District.**

*Students on Thursday called on the Olathe school district, "in a moment of crisis," to make schools and curriculum more inclusive, following a student's racist homecoming proposal that went viral.*

*The Olathe school board met for the first time since two white students posed with a racist homecoming sign, sparking widespread outrage. Many parents and students have questioned the district's handling of the incident, including the alleged punishment of a Black student who said he was there when it happened.*

*And they say it's time to combat the deeper racial issues in Olathe schools.*

*"As a young Black man, I am deserving of representation in my classrooms, and I should be able to feel comfortable when I go to school," Olathe East High School senior Jylon Hollinshed told the school board. "What makes us so undeserving of learning about our history or reading literature that is a reflection of our own experiences? Especially when we have had to sit through year after year of in-depth analysis of every white figure in America."*

*Last month, a photo circulated of a white male Olathe South High School student asking a white female St. James Academy student to homecoming using a sign that read: "If I was Black I would be picking cotton but I'm white so I'm picking you for HOCO."*

*Officials with both the Olathe school district and the parochial school in Lenexa have said they were investigating and determining appropriate disciplinary action. But neither school has released details, citing student privacy concerns.*

*The Star is not naming the students involved because they are all minors.*

*An Olathe South sophomore, who is Black, told The Star that he was there during the incident. He and his friend, the white boy in the photo, both agreed to make a homecoming proposal sign for the girl shown in the photo, he said.*

*He said, in a message to The Star, that they had seen the same "picking cotton" sign made by students in other districts and posted online. The Black student claimed that after the sign was made, he warned his white friend, that it was "f\*\*\*\*\* up, don't do it, and that you are going to get canceled."*

*"To which his response was, 'I'll be fine.'"*

*He said they presented the sign to the girl and said she used a marker to check "yes" to the proposal on the sign, and he took a photo of it. All three of them posted the photo on Snapchat, he said, which was then shared widely.*

*The white boy, he said, "transferred to online (school) before he could get a punishment and then they told him he can't transfer back even if he wanted to for the rest of the year."*

*The Black student said school officials told him he must transfer to the district's virtual academy or to an alternative school program for the semester, and he has since moved to online school.*

*The Star was unable to reach the other students and parents involved on Thursday.*

*The girl's mom, Rhonda Windholz, has faced national backlash after she gave an interview to KSHB 41, in which she claimed that the Black student carried the majority of the blame for the incident, and that her daughter was unaware of the situation until after the photo was taken.*

*And many have shown outrage that the Black student was apparently forced to transfer to virtual school. On Thursday, his friend, Olathe student David Brox, told The Star, "I think that the district should reconsider their decisions and in the future be more culturally sensitive toward people of color in the district."*

*Superintendent Brent Yeager addressed the incident on Thursday, as well as rumors circulating about how the district is responding.*

*"Let me be very clear that the behavior exhibited in this situation is unacceptable and does not reflect our core value of inclusivity," he said. "In the days following the post, there has been a lot of conversation, and frankly, blatant and unfounded misinformation circulating online about how the incident is being handled.*

*"We will not tolerate racial discrimination in our school district. With the current incident, we are working closely with all families involved and are honoring their wishes on how they would like the situation to be handled to best meet the safety and educational needs of their children."*

*School officials have not confirmed any information provided to The Star regarding disciplinary action.*

*In a letter sent to Olathe South families, Principal Dale Longenecker said, "We are making sure we provide educational opportunities for ALL students involved that meet their needs during this challenging time. We are not singling out one student and we are not unfairly handling one situation over another."*

*"This has been a challenging situation that is only made worse by misinformation online. While these events happened off campus and have complicated the situation, it has also spurred our students, staff and community to double down on our ongoing work with diversity, equity and inclusion. There is much to do but we are committed to the ongoing work and we need your help."*

*Yeager said Thursday that, "at the end of the day, the safety and education of our students is the most important priority we have as a district."*

*"It is this commitment that has led our work in addressing this situation with all families involved. What you are reading online is not a reflection of who we are as a school system, our values, our actions or how we handle tough situations."*

*Many parents and students have argued that the district should be more transparent about what took place.*

*"The outreach that I received is like, wow, they really don't care about us," said AJ Jones, senior at Olathe East who said she is vice president of the school's Black Student Union. She argued that the district should have reached out to every student after the social media post began circulating online.*

*"We put everything into school," she said. "We go every day with smiles on our faces. We participate in class. We help younger children. And we aren't given the same respect back. That's the issue."*

*Brox called it a "moment of crisis" in the Olathe school district and across the Kansas City metro, where schools have seen several racist incidents in recent weeks.*

*"As a community, our pleas are for the district to be more than culturally sensitive. ... With numerous instances surfacing now, I've simply been let down by the Olathe school district's conduct with handling issues," he said.*

*Brox said he has long been treated differently in school due to his race, "from the way I was punished, to the way certain things were done, and to the way that certain staff members interacted with me solely on the basis of skin color, I have felt the imbalance and it has become quite discouraging."*

*Officials have said that the district has come a long way in its diversity, equity and inclusion work, and that it must continue. Its diversity and engagement department works to provide diversity training and resources*

*across the district, ensure district policies and practices are equitable, recruit and hire diverse candidates, and more.*

*Several students of color said the district must do better. They advocated for the district to ramp up its diversity and equity initiatives; to improve cultural competencies among staff and students; to provide school resource officers with cultural awareness training; and to expand curriculum so that the history and experiences of people of color are thoroughly taught.*

*"It's come to a point in the Olathe district where I feel like we're doing quote-unquote diversity lessons. Teachers are quote-unquote being trained. But we haven't seen any data, haven't seen any statistics. I feel like things aren't going to change until we can actually see the progress ourselves," Jones said.*

*School board member Brad Boyd on Thursday said, "I think it's important, in this particular case, when we hear from our students of color that we first listen to them, that we validate them, that we believe their feelings because that's their perspective and their perspective is their reality."*

*"It's important for us as a district to lean into them, to care for them and to let them know that they aren't alone, and we are working every single day to address some of the concerns that they brought up," he said.*

*Stacey Knoell, executive director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission, on Thursday also advocated for the district to ramp up its diversity initiatives and hiring efforts.*

*"This is Exhibit A for why the Olathe school system needs to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority," she said of the racist homecoming sign. "I do believe that all children would benefit greatly from learning about a variety of peoples and cultures. Perhaps such an appreciation would have prevented the unfortunate choice of a homecoming proposal."*

*"Schools are places where children are taught to know things. And an education that explores and celebrates diversity makes it clear that there's more to the Black experience than 'picking cotton.'"*


**(Source: The Kansas City Star, October 7, 2021)**



## Social Media

Stacey Robinson Knoell  
March 24, 2022 · 🌐


**Z** For overqualified women who have to remain calm, friendly, knowledgeable and professional in front of underqualified men ... Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.  
zombywoof68



Cecelia Robinson Harrison  
March 22, 2022 · 🌐

Stacey Robinson Knoell  
March 19, 2022 · 🌐

The US House passed the Crown Act!



THEGUARDIAN.COM

**US House passes bill banning discrimination against Black hairstyles**  
Natural Black hairstyles are often considered 'unprofessional' and school children face detenti...

1 2 comments

Stacey Robinson Knoell  
March 13, 2022 · 🌐



**would effectively ban mask mandates from being**

YOUTUBE.COM  
Kansas Week 9 Recap: state constitution, immunizations, trans kids, health sec., and more

Like Comment Share

Stacey Robinson Knoell updated her cover photo.  
January 21, 2021 · 🌐



37 2 comments

Share



Stacey Robinson Knoell

January 20, 2021 · 🌐

...

What a morning! A. watched much of it with me asking a bunch of questions along the way. I was honored to share this day with her.



👍❤️ 83

5 comments



Stacey Robinson Knoell

January 20, 2021 · 🌐

...

Praise God, we made it to this day. He ran on fear and hatred. The rapists and drug dealers are coming from the south. They will take your jobs, they will kill you. The Dems will take your guns. He ran on division and suspicion, a literal and figurative wall. He ran on a promise to take America backward. We all heard it but it meant different things to different people. Some wanted to go back to the 1950s, others, not so much. The last 4 years have been chaotic and disruptive. The events of January 6th were the inevitable outcome, the unavoidable end to this president's term. I am glad to see him go.

Now I look to this new administration with hope. It will be a job to right this ship of state. There is so much work to be done internationally and domestically. It is abundantly clear that there are some deep problems here at home. But I do have a sliver of hope that things can move in a different direction away from fear and hatred and toward civility.

👍❤️🙏 46

5 comments

👍 Like

💬 Comment

🔗 Share



Stacey Robinson Knoell

November 5, 2020 · 🌐

...

Long post warning.

Everything feels prickly. It is like I'm an air-filled balloon in a meadow where 48% of the plants are flowers but 52% are cacti. It all may be green, but it is not all safe. I don't have a safe place to land. I can't just float freely through. I will always be on alert, watching my edges, on guard for their sharp points that are intended to harm those not like them.

(Small edit here: if you are a cactus, please don't try to offer words of "comfort" just yet. They are not landing how you intend.)

I find I don't have the vocabulary to adequately describe what I feel. I have cussed more in the past 24 hours than I have in the past 24 years. I thought maybe if I brought those words out of reserve, maybe they could express the emotion, maybe they could get it out. They did not help, so I will put them back.

I am deeply and profoundly disappointed, but I am not upset over my race. I did exactly what I was brought in to do. We took time and care and crafted a strategy and message to thread a specific needle. We ran clean. Y'all, we ran clean when there were opinions, suggestions, literal admonitions, heck, the voice in MY head at times even agreed that we should metaphorically load the cannon and fire it hard and continuously at my opponent. But this campaign had my name on the letterhead and I still had to face myself in the mirror, so we ran clean. We ran hard. Just between you and me, we ran hard enough that I think it was a factor in the turning point for the race. When the dust settled and there was a new opponent I recall standing in my office, looking out the window and I said out loud, "I get to find out what I'm made of All. Over. Again."

I am proud of the race we ran. I never ran as a placeholder, but I never ran as favored to win. In any other situation, a first time candidate, a Black woman Democrat running in uber red District 9 losing by 4 points would be cause for celebration.

But the rest of the county. While not unanimous, the theme of the night was 52-48. We did not break the super majority in the Senate. The policy implications are overwhelming. Medicaid Expansion, women's reproductive rights, a sustainable tax policy, fully funded public schools, unions, criminal justice reform, any state level non-discrimination policy that would protect the civil rights of anyone who would look out of place on "Leave it to Beaver", heck, the Crown Act or medical cannabis. It is all in real jeopardy. Please don't say, "We'll get 'em next time" because Susan Wagle is on the record planning to gerrymander the Dems out of existence.

I know. I know. "Bright future, not finished in politics, don't fade back..." I'll get there, y'all, give me a sec. I just need to get through a stretch of time without crying first. I just need to catch my breath.

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I know. I know. "Bright future, not finished in politics, don't fade back..." I'll get there, y'all, give me a sec. I just need to get through a stretch of time without crying first. I just need to catch my breath.

Then my older girl gave me a card. It says, "Remember this: 'You[r] true self is ok. No one is damaging your relationship with God.' – Stacey Knoell - Love, A PS. You know what would make you feel better? A puppy."

My children are watching me and apparently, they do hear what I tell them. LOL! And if they have lived through this journey for over a year and witnessed up close my last 24 hours and this is their take away, it was all worth it.

I don't know about that puppy tho...



Stacey Robinson Knoell

May 31, 2020 · 🌐



Thank you, [Victoria](#), for this image.





Stacey Robinson Knoell

April 22, 2020 · 🌐



**"FOR THE RECORD,  
I AM NOT DYING SO THAT THIS  
COUNTRY'S ECONOMY CAN IMPROVE.**

**MY ANCESTORS ALREADY DID THAT."**

**- ANDREA LASHEA**



Stacey Robinson Knoell

April 8, 2020 · 🌐



Y'all, I know 45 wanted the country up and running by Easter. I know the far right just overturned the Governor's order to halt religious services, but please, y'all this is important. We need to stay home, we really do. So many churches are providing online services this coming weekend and for the foreseeable future really. There are many ways to celebrate Easter that do not involve putting your health or the health of others at risk. "Church" is not about a building and ultimately one's relationship with God does not hinge on corporate worship. The body will meet together again. This too shall pass. Right now we just need to praise God at home.

👍❤️ 26

2 comments



Like



Comment



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Chad Johnson

I heard something about church services now deemed essential? Is that true in KS?

4y Like Reply



Stacey Robinson Knoell

December 30, 2019 · 🌐



Literally anyone in Kansas could have told them this would happen.



NPR.ORG

### After 2 Years, Trump Tax Cuts Have Failed To Deliver On GOP's Promises

The president said it would be "rocket fuel for our economy," but the Republican tax cut passe...



9

1 comment



Stacey Knoell SD23

June 8, 2021 · 🌐



This conversation needs to continue.



KANSASREFLECTOR.COM

### What the Kansas attorney general needs to know about critical race theory | Kansas Reflector



26

1 share



Stacey Knoell SD23  
May 4, 2021

This is no way to run a state.

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Kansas Legislative Sessions website. The left screenshot displays the details for SB 50, including its title and a list of legislators who voted in favor of the override. The right screenshot shows the override vote results, indicating that the bill was passed by a majority of 21-13.

**Stand Up Blue Valley**  
May 4, 2021

Yesterday, legislators voted to override several of Gov. Kelly's vetoes - among them, SB 50.

Written by the Koch-backed Kansas Chamber, SB 50 will give tax breaks to businesses at the expense of revenue to the state, including funding our schools. If that sounds vaguely familiar, it should be. That's EXACTLY how the Brownback disaster started: Cut taxes on businesses...result - not enough revenue to cover expenses. Say, "Oh wow, we can't fund schools after all." That became "Schools are greedy! They need to make ends meet with the money we can give them, like everyone else!" Of course, this was AFTER the legislature commissioned a study to determine funding needed for public schools, initially voted to fund schools, and even had a plan in place to do so. Unfortunately, anti-public education, zero-tax Brownback/Colyer and enough anti-public education legislators were elected to do significant long-term damage to our schools. That was then.

This is now. The 2021 legislative session, despite having a pro-public education Governor, has enough Koch-backed, anti-public education legislators in both chambers to be able to override the governor's veto of yet another irresponsible tax bill. See how BV-area legislators voted on the override yesterday.



Stacey Knoell SD23  
April 9, 2021 · 🌐



Rui Xu  
April 9, 2021 · 🌐

Last night, near midnight, the House passed the anti-trans athletics bill 76-43. I voted no. This bill is one of the cruelest and most hateful pieces of legislation I've seen in my time in Topeka. It targets only trans teens, a population we know is already one of the most vulnerable groups of people in the state. This bill only furthers the stigma. To my trans constituents, or anybody else that sees this that needs to hear this: I love you, I cherish you, and I'm here for you. Kansas is better with you.  
<https://abcnews.go.com/.../passage-kansas-bill-trans...>



ABCNEWS.GO.COM

### Passage of Kansas bill on trans athletes won't be veto-proof

Kansas conservatives appear likely to push a proposed ban on transgender athletes in girl'...



Stacey Knoell SD23  
April 6, 2021 · 🌐



Week 12 in the Kansas Legislature. Schools saddled with hearings because people don't like masks. Budget shortfalls due to tax cuts. ALEC pushing legislation making it a felony to protest against oil companies. Kansas' version of voter suppression laws. It is just another day with the Republican supermajority in the Statehouse.



SB 172 Criminalizing Protest

S. Committee Senate 29-9 H. Committee House 82-42 Governor

### Louisiana law was used against peaceful protestors

YOUTUBE.COM

Week 12 Kansas Statehouse Recap: Tax cuts, tax breaks, COVID-19 school challenge, voting, and more



Stacey Knoell SD23  
March 16, 2021 · 🌐

This is good news.

Brandon Woodard for Kansas  
March 16, 2021 · 🌐

The Kansas House took Final Action on this bill today. It failed 55-69. I voted NO. These decisions should be made by the elected local school boards and elected State Board of Education. Further, this bill would have lasting consequences unrelated to COVID-19.



KANSASREFLECTOR.COM

Kansas Senate bill forces all K-12 students back to in-school instruction in March | Kansas Reflector

👍❤️ 42

Stacey Knoell SD23  
February 10, 2021 · 🌐

I can only shake my head in disbelief.

From the article:

"Sen. Jeff Longbine, an Emporia Republican voting against the tax bill, said tenor of the debate and outcome of voting offered him a sense of déjà vu. He said it felt much like 2012 when the Legislature passed an astounding income tax cut signed by Gov. Sam Brownback that haunted the state for years. The Brownback plan to drive the state's income tax to zero was officially abandoned in 2017.


"Not many of us that are in this body that were here in 2012 when we had a very, very similar day. We took a reasonable, responsible tax bill and we blew it up," said Longbine, who recalled being assured sensible people in the Legislature would correct the overreach. "I spent five, six, seven years after that cutting budgets and raising sales taxes. Fool me once, but you won't fool me twice."

Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, a Democrat from Lenexa, said the Senate-passed bill contained tax cuts for the rich that didn't have an impact on a pandemic-damaged economy and a huge unemployment problem."




KANSASREFLECTOR.COM

Kansas Senate jettisons restraint to transform modest tax bill into \$470 million

 **Stacey Knoell SD23**  
September 16, 2020 · 🌐

The heart of the #blacklivesmatter movement is a plea for the police to stop killing Black people at disproportionately high rates. Police need more training and resources to help them de-escalate situations rather than resorting to lethal force. I also support allocating more money to mental health resources so we get the right kinds of people on the right kinds of calls – the police shouldn't have to do mental health work.




“

The heart of the  
#blacklivesmatter  
movement is a plea for  
the police to stop killing  
Black people at  
disproportionately high  
rates.

---

STACEY KNOELL

 **Stacey Knoell SD23**  
August 18, 2020 · 🌐

Amid the policy discussion, there remains a core spiritual truth behind why I am running. I would love to legislate from the standpoint of compassion for people who are in need.

Hang with me for a sec, I have recently been a part of a discussion on the differences between the individualist worldview and the collectivist worldview. I find that even with my individualist understanding - I control me, I am responsible for my actions, no one can make me feel anything without my permission - I am ultimately collectivist in my worldview. We are all in this together. We are not getting off this planet in large numbers anytime soon, so let's figure out how to get along. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Every man for himself is not how I want to live or legislate.

So when Governor Kelly issues an executive order to halt evictions, my heart soars because I consider the people in need who the order helps.

When elected, I look forward to legislating from a standpoint of compassion. I look forward to joining Gov. Kelly.

<https://kansasreflector.com/.../gov-laura-kelly.../>



Stacey Knoell SD23

August 11, 2020 · 🌐

...

I understand the real threat of climate change. I want to make sure that Kansans have cleaner water to drink, safer air to breathe, more renewable energy, and less waste. This is why I am so thrilled to receive the endorsement of the Sierra Club, an organization dedicated to preserving and protecting our planet.

It's time to take a stand, to be the generation that hands our children a solution rather than a bigger problem. Will you support me?

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/knoell>



👍❤️ 49

2 shares



Stacey Knoell SD23

July 28, 2020 · 🌐

...

I'm thrilled to receive an endorsement from The Collective, an organization working to fix the challenge of underrepresentation of the Black community in elected seats of power throughout our nation.

A few weekends ago, I took part in the Hope Walk to bring awareness to Social Justice, Community Relations, and Mental Health. As I walked, I wound up alongside one of the organizers pushing his two young daughters in a stroller. We passed a patch of wildflowers and the older girl reached out to grab one – but missed. I doubled back to get one for her and her sister.

She thanked me as I handed it to her, still focused on the flower. It wasn't until I started to walk on when I heard her calling to me, "You look like me! She looks like me!"

I had not given a speech that day. I was not "Candidate Stacey Knoell, running for State Senate." I was a woman with chocolate skin and two-strand twisted natural hair, just like hers. She didn't respond to me because I gave her a flower, she lit up because we looked alike.

When I say representation matters, it is because little chocolate-skinned girls with natural hair need to look up and see people like them in every area of their lives. I love that she is growing up seeing people who look like her being involved in the active work of making the world a better place.


Our children are watching.

(Photo credit Will England)



"Republicans in the Kansas Senate have managed to squeeze a number of bad decisions into a short special session. This week, they even denied a judgeship to a respected longtime public defender, Carl Folsom III, because he was once assigned to represent a man convicted of possessing child porn. Which only deepens our impression that one problem area for Kansas Senate President Susan Wagle, state Sen. Molly Baumgardner and others is the U.S. Constitution."

Read more:  
[https://www.kansascity.com/\\_/edit/\\_article/243295591.html](https://www.kansascity.com/_/edit/_article/243295591.html)



KANSASCITY.COM  
**Kansas Senate denies judgeship to respected public defender for doing his job**  
 Yes, Carl Folsom III represented people accused of some awful crimes. Just as the Constitution ...

28  
 2 comments 2 shares

Like Comment Share

View more comments

Greg Klein  
 This state is FULL of hypocr...

Stacey Knoell SD23  
 Brenda Walton

**Stacey Knoell SD23**  
 June 8, 2020 · 🌐

I attended a #blacklivesmatter protest Saturday in Gardner, KS. It was a fantastic turnout. Things are changing. We are living through a watershed moment. History will comment on what we do and how we choose to respond. I am determined to be on the right side of history.

Shout out to my fellow candidate [Becca Peck for Kansas!](#)

[#knoell4senate2020](#) @ Gardner, Kansas



**STACEY**  
**KNOELL**  
 FOR STATE SENATE



Stacey Knoell SD23

April 8, 2020 · 🌐



In a "shockingly irresponsible" move (to quote Governor Kelly) along party lines, Republican lawmakers in Topeka overturned an executive order by Governor Kelly to include church services in her ban on gatherings of more than ten people. Against all expert medical advice, Republicans are endangering the lives of Kansans. As long as Republicans hold an 80% majority, there is nothing we can do to stop them. It has never been more important to restore common sense and balance to Topeka.

[https://www.kmbc.com/\\_/lawmakers-overturn.../32085788](https://www.kmbc.com/_/lawmakers-overturn.../32085788)



KMBC.COM

### Lawmakers overturn religious worship size limits in Kansas

Legislative Coordinating Council voted 5-2 Wednesday to topple the order limiting in-person r...

👎👍👏 19

10 comments 2 shares



Stacey Knoell @Knoell4KS - Apr 19, 2021



Replying to @LindseyLou1983

I can't promise you normalization of nudes but I can promise you a lot of support if you decide to run for office. If you are even remotely interested, we should chat.



1

4



Lindsey (she/her) 🌈🔒

38.7K posts



Follow

Lindsey (she/her) 🌈🔒

@LindseyLou1983

Kindest cunt this side of the Missouri River ❤️

#SoberAF for 5yrs & counting 🍷

📍 Kansas City 🌻 📅 Joined February 2014

1,659 Following 2,343 Followers





Stacey Knoell @Knoell4KS · Aug 26, 2020



2

4



Stacey Knoell reposted



Theresa Sahhar @Beekeeper2000 - Jun 20, 2020

Stacey! Sharice! Strong Support. #BlackLivesMatter #blacklivesmatterko



Stacey Knoell and Rep. Sharice Davids



Stacey Knoell @Knoell4KS - Apr 9, 2020

**PROTECT THE HEALTH OF ALL KANSANS**

Please stay at home unless performing one of the following essential activities:

- Seeking medical care**
- Picking up necessities** such as food & medicine
- Engaging in outdoor activity** While maintaining 6-ft. distance & no more than 10 persons gathered
- Going to & from work** As defined in the Kansas Essential Function Framework
- Providing care for people or animals in another location**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [EDRES.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](https://edrees.gov/coronavirus)

🗨️ 1 🍷 3 📄 📌 📤



Stacey Knoell @Knoell4KS - Apr 9, 2020

In a shockingly irresponsible move along party lines, Republican lawmakers overturned Governor Kelly's order to include church services in her ban on mass gatherings. Against expert medical advice, they are endangering the lives of Kansans.

[kmbc.com/article/lawmak...](https://kmbc.com/article/lawmak...)

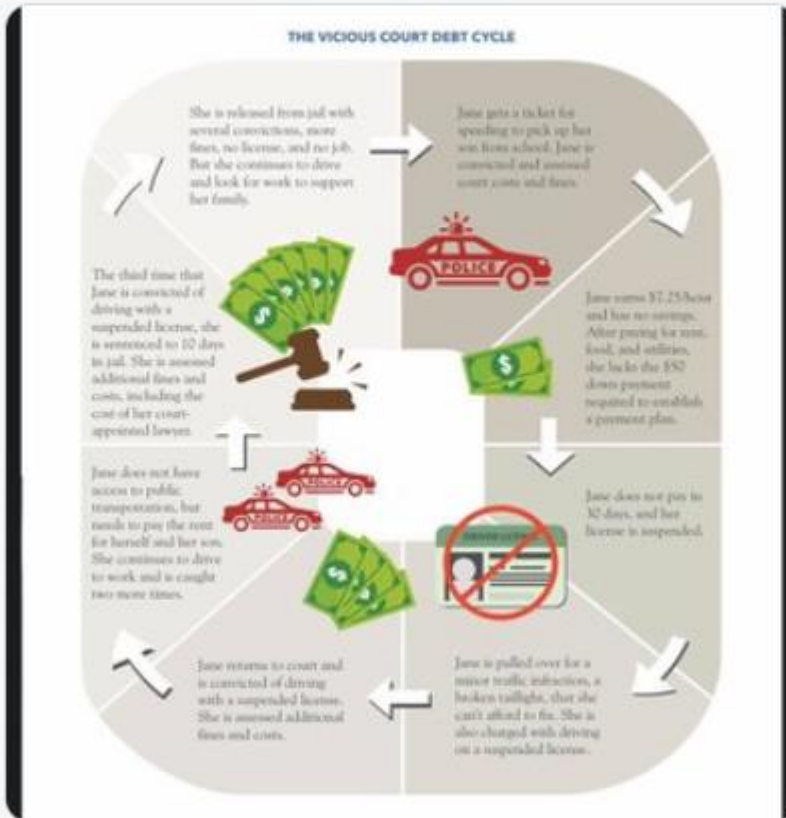
🗨️ 🔄 🍷 📄 📌 📤



Stacey Knoell @Knoell4KS · Feb 20, 2020

Breaking the Cycle

One simple step our current legislature is proposing to break the cycle of poverty is to end the authority to revoke driver's licenses due to inability to pay fines. (HB 2434)





knoell4ks • Follow  
Gardner, Kansas

knoell4ks I had the opportunity to attend a #blacklivesmatter protest today in Gardner, KS. It was a fantastic turnout. Things are changing. We are living through a watershed moment. History will comment on what we do and how we choose to respond. I am determined to be on the right side of history. #knoell4senate2020 #kansanswhocare #itsmyturn #runforsomething #ourchildrenarewatching #wemustdobetter Edited · 215w

## Contributions

### Gave to Elizabeth Warren for President in 2020.

A	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
committee	recipient	contribut	contribut	contributi	memo_text	two_year	schedule_
ACTBLUE	U	STACEY	KNOELL	50	EARMARKED FOR WARREN FOR PRESIDENT, INC. (C00693234)	2020	SA
ACTBLUE	U	STACEY	KNOELL	100	EARMARKED FOR KALI FOR KANSAS (C00714535)	2020	SA
ACTBLUE	U	STACEY	KNOELL	25	EARMARKED FOR KALI FOR KANSAS (C00714535)	2020	SA
ACTBLUE	U	STACEY	KNOELL	60	EARMARKED FOR KANSAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY - FEDERAL ACCOUNT (C00019380)	2022	SA

(Source: [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov) search of Stacey Knoell Contributions)

### Many contributions to Kansas Democrats

Category	Contributor	Employer	Occupation	Date	Amount	Recipient	Recipient Jurisdiction
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK		07-08-2018	\$50	CALCARA, MATTHEW (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	06-08-2021	\$30	WOODARD, BRANDON (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK		07-14-2022	\$50	EITERICH, COURTNEY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	07-18-2022	\$50	TRIPP, COURTNEY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-17-2022	\$2,000	REPASS, JEANNA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-06-2022	\$100	BOYD, BRAD (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	08-28-2022	\$50	MILLER, DENNIS (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	10-04-2022	\$100	TRIPP, COURTNEY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK		07-19-2022	\$100	WEST, VANESSA VAUGHN (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	12-31-2021	\$250	WOODARD, BRANDON (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	06-06-2022	\$100	BOYD, BRAD (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	02-21-2020	\$25	SCHWELLER, ANGELA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	06-06-2020	\$20	DIXON, KATIE (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 65052	BLANK		10-26-2019	\$200	KNOELL, STACEY (D)	KS

Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	BUDETTI, WENDY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		05-31-2020	\$50	HASWOOD, CHRISTINA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	FEATHERSTON, LINDA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-05-2020	\$20	SHIMEALL, W MICHAEL (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	BYERS, STEPHANIE (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		09-30-2020	\$2	HOYE, JO ELLA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	SCHOLTZ, JOANA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-01-2020	\$30	WOODARD, BRANDON (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-05-2020	\$20	SCHWELLER, ANGELA (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		09-30-2020	\$2	SYKES, DINAH H (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-08-2020	\$30	WOODARD, BRANDON (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		09-30-2020	\$2	HASWOOD, CHRISTINA (D)	KS
<b>FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS THE USE OF CONTRIBUTOR INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS OR FOR ANY COMMERCIAL PURPOSE.</b>							
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		10-25-2019	\$37	KNOELL, STACEY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	YEAGER, STEPHANIE (D)	KS

Money to Parties	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		09-30-2020	\$2	KANSANS FOR A DEMOCRATIC HOUSE (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		11-04-2019	\$145	KNOELL, STACEY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		09-02-2019	\$29	WOODARD, BRANDON (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	02-21-2020	\$25	BUDETTI, WENDY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-11-2020	\$50	FINE, COLE (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		05-08-2020	\$10	PARKER, BRETT (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		12-28-2019	\$50	WOODARD, BRANDON (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	02-21-2020	\$25	DXON, KATIE (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		06-18-2020	\$35	PARKER, BRETT (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	DXON, KATIE (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-01-2020	\$25	FINE, COLE (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	VAUGHN, LINDSAY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	06-06-2020	\$20	FINE, COLE (ID)	KS
Money to Parties	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	SENATE DEMOCRATIC CMTE OF KANSAS (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		10-23-2019	\$134	KNOELL, STACEY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	06-06-2020	\$20	WOODARD, BRANDON (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	KOESTEN, CAROLYN JOY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK		10-29-2020	-\$516	KNOELL, STACEY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	09-30-2020	\$2	CONSTANCE, LINDSEY (ID)	KS
Money to Candidates	KNOELL, STACEY OLATHE, 66062	BLANK	YOGA INSTRUCTOR	05-08-2020	\$25	SCHWELLER, ANGELA (ID)	KS
Money to Parties	STACEY KNOELL CAMPAIGN CMTE OLATHE, 66061	BLANK		09-15-2020	\$8,961	KANSAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY (ID)	KS
Money to Parties	STACEY KNOELL CAMPAIGN CMTE OLATHE, 66061	BLANK		10-16-2020	\$15,000	KANSAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY (ID)	KS

Displaying records 51 - 53 of 53

Note: We only display the first 500 records. Need more? Please contact us [requests@opensecrets.org](mailto:requests@opensecrets.org)

Category	Contributor	Employer	Occupation	Date	Amount	Recipient	Recipient Jurisdiction
Money to Parties	STACEY KNOELL CAMPAIGN CMT CLATHE, 66061	BLANK		10-13-2020	\$6,030	KANSAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY (D)	KS
Money to Candidates	STACEY KNOELL CAMPAIGN CMT CLATHE, 66061	BLANK		11-10-2020	\$351	JERCHA, SALLY (D)	KS
<b>FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS THE USE OF CONTRIBUTOR INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOLICITING CONTRIBUTIONS OR FOR ANY COMMERCIAL PURPOSE.</b>							
Money to Parties	STACEY KNOELL CAMPAIGN CMT CLATHE, 66061	BLANK		10-30-2020	\$8,850	KANSAS DEMOCRATIC PARTY (D)	KS

(Source: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org); Search of Stacey Knoell)

## Her campaign received \$1,000 from the “Defund the Police” group called “Future Now Fund”



**Candidate Last Minute  
Contribution Report  
For Contributions Received from  
July 24 2020 through July 29 2020**

**July 30 2020**

901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, KS 66612  
Office (785) 296-4219  
Fax (785) 296-2548  
[ethics.kansas.gov](http://ethics.kansas.gov)

Candidate Name: **Stacey Knoell B**  
Address: **12501 S. Arapaho Drive**  
Address2:  
City: **Olathe** Zip: **66062** County: **Johnson**  
Office Sought: **State Senator** District: **9**

1. This report must be filed by 5:00 p.m. on **July 30, 2020** showing any contribution received from a single source of \$300 or more to a state candidate.
2. The report may be filed by hand delivery, express delivery, electronically with the Secretary of State, or by fax at 785-291-3051. A copy of this report must also be filed with the candidate’s home county election officer by hand delivery, express delivery or fax transmission.
3. All information included on this report must also be included on the Receipts and Expenditure Report.

Date	Name and Address of Contributor	Occupation And Industry of Individual Contributor	Amount
07/29/20	Future Now Fund 700 Thirteenth Street, NW Suite 600 Washington DC 20005		\$1,000.00
07/27/20	Missouri and Kansas Laborers' PAC 3450 Hollenberg DR Bridgeton MO 63044		\$1,000.00
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			<b>\$2,000.00</b>



(Source: Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, Stacey Knoell Campaign Finance Report Filed 7-30-2020;  
[http://ethics.ks.gov/CFAScanned/Senate/2020ElecCycle/LastMinute/S09SK\\_2020PLF.pdf](http://ethics.ks.gov/CFAScanned/Senate/2020ElecCycle/LastMinute/S09SK_2020PLF.pdf))

Took \$1,000 from the Kansas Trial Lawyers PAC

	OLATHE KS 66062			
09/03/20	KTLA CONSUMER/CIVIL JUSTICE PAC 719 SW VAN BUREN TOPEKA KS 66603	Check		\$1,000.00

(Source: Source: Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, Stacey Knoell Campaign Finance Report Filed 10-26-2020;  
[http://ethics.ks.gov/CFAScanned/Senate/2020ElecCycle/202010/S09SK\\_202010.pdf](http://ethics.ks.gov/CFAScanned/Senate/2020ElecCycle/202010/S09SK_202010.pdf))

### Audit of KAAAC

Rep. Patrick Penn requested an audit of the Kansas African American Commission which was completed in August of 2023.

The Commission was found to be lacking in compliance on three key requirements relating to its duties and did not always get pre-approval for some expenditures made in 2023.

**The Kansas African American Affairs Commission did not comply with 3 key requirements related to its duties, and did not always get pre-approval for selected fiscal year 2023 expenditures.**

The commission failed to comply on 2 of 6 meeting-related duties, as they didn't elect a secretary or chairperson and they didn't have the standing committees as outlined in the bylaws.

**The commission did not comply with 2 of 6 meeting-related duties outlined in law or bylaws in the timeframe we reviewed.**

- **Figure 2** shows whether the commission complied with each of the requirements we reviewed. As the figure shows, the commission met 6 of the 9 requirements we reviewed related to meeting and staffing operations. For example, the commissioners were appointed by the required parties and the commission held 5 meetings in 2022.
- However, the commission did not meet 2 meeting-related requirements we reviewed.
  - The commission did not elect a new chairperson and secretary annually, as required by law. In fiscal year 2022, the commission held elections for those positions in April of 2022. However, in fiscal year 2023 the commission has not held elections in any meeting including the last fiscal year 2023 meeting (June 2, 2023).
  - The commission did not have standing committees as outlined in its bylaws. Bylaws specify the need for 7 standing committees. Those are executive, budget, legislative, public affairs and health and human services, education, business and economic development, and special projects committees.

**The commission did not comply with one of its staffing duties when the Governor appointed Knoell. The proper procedure would have been the commission to appoint the ED and then for the governor to approve the selection.**

**Further, the commission did not comply with 1 of 3 staffing duties outlined in state law.**

- The law requires the commission to appoint and the Governor to approve the selection of the executive director. This was a staffing-related requirement we evaluated as shown in **Figure 2**.
- The Governor appointed the director on May 28, 2021. Based on email communications we reviewed, Governor's Office staff reached out to the commission chair prior to the announcement. The chair supported the selection and supplied a public statement to the Governor's staff giving her and her fellow commissioners' support of the announcement.
- This may have happened because the same process was used for the previous executive director during Governor Brownback's term. A news article from that time indicates that the previous director was appointed directly by the then-Governor, which may have set the precedent.

**The audit revealed that the commission was not conducting activities in over half the assigned functions of the organization.**

**State law authorizes the commission to conduct activities in 11 areas, and we saw evidence of activity relating to about half of those.**

- The law gives the commission 11 functions, powers, and duties. These include things like coordinating and assisting state agencies with education, employment, housing, and several other types of services to African Americans. They're also authorized to evaluate existing programs and proposed legislation that affect African Americans. The full list of functions, powers, and duties we evaluated is shown in **Figure 2**.
- The commission conducted activities in fiscal years 2022 or 2023 that related to 5 of those areas. For example, the commission held 2 townhall meetings in Wichita that align with its duty of gathering and disseminating information and conducting hearings, conferences, and special studies on problems and programs concerning African Americans.
- The commission didn't conduct activities in 6 of those areas in 2022 or 2023. For example, we didn't see evidence of activities to either propose new programs concerning African Americans, or to conduct training programs for community leadership and service project staff.
- However, the law doesn't require activity in each of those 11 areas each year. Also, by identifying these areas as functions, powers, and duties (instead of only duties), the commission has discretion to decide which of those areas it wants to focus on.

**Commissioners gave Knoell some positive reviews, but also claimed she “wasn't as effective or responsive as she should be.” The audit claims she wasn't responsive to questions from the commissioners and wasn't making them aware of her activity in their districts.**

**The commissioners who responded to our survey generally had positive reviews of the executive director's performance, but some thought she wasn't as effective or responsive as she should be.**

- We surveyed commission members on their opinions of the executive director's effectiveness, quality of service, and responsiveness. 6 of the 7 commissioners responded.
- Commissioners generally had positive opinions of the executive director's effectiveness, responsiveness, and quality of services. We asked a total of 6 questions related to the director's performance in terms of effectiveness, quality, and responsiveness to commissioners and constituents. Average ratings ranged from 3.8 (responsiveness to commissioners) to 4.4 (responsiveness and quality services to constituents). The highest possible rating was 5.
- However, several comments indicated dissatisfaction about the executive director's communication, such as not informing commissioners about her activities in their districts and not being responsive to questions from commissioners.

**The audit questioned if Commissioner members were adequately trained on travel expenditure reimbursement and suggested formal training on it. Knoell rejected that recommendation.**

included throughout the report as appropriate.

Legislative Post Audit Committee rules require us to report when an agency fails to respond to a recommendation or responds negatively. The commission's executive director rejected our recommendation to provide training on travel expenditures.

**The audit revealed that there were several expenditures that were reviewed that did not receive written approval to ensure they were appropriate.**

**However, about half of the 11 individual expenditures we reviewed in detail did not receive written approval to ensure they were appropriate.**

- The Governor's Office is responsible for approving and paying the commission's expenditures. The executive director is not involved in that process for regularly occurring expenditures, such as salaries, rent, and interagency expenditures (e.g. computer-related costs from the Office of Information Technology Services).
- We reviewed policies and interviewed the director and Governor's Office staff to understand how non-regular expenditure requests are processed. There are 2 components, as follows:
  - Pre-approval: the director must seek written pre-approval (via email, with necessary documentation) from the Governor's Office. Governor's Office staff review and approve the planned expense, or ask for more details or documentation as needed.
  - Payment approval: After the expense is incurred, the director supplies supporting documentation to the Governor's Office staff. Those staff then approve the expense to initiate the payment through the state's accounting system.
- This process maintains an appropriate segregation of duties because the requestor (the director) is different from the approver or payer of bills (Governor's Office staff).
- We selected 11 expenses and reviewed records to verify each received the required approvals through the Governor's Office. We chose those 11 expenses because they appeared to be one-time or non-routine items. In all, the judgmental sample totaled about \$7,400 of the \$110,500 spent from July 1, 2022 through May 30, 2023 (6.7%). Lastly, the selected expenditures covered almost all of the commission's non-routine expenses in the 11 months.

**The audit claimed that Knoell didn't request or receive written approvals in 6 out of 11 expenditures.**

- All 11 expenditures we judgmentally selected were ultimately approved for payment. However, 6 expenditures lacked written pre-approval from the Governor's Office. **Figure 3** summarizes all 11 items we reviewed and our results. For example, one expense we reviewed was for a leadership training tuition fee. The Governor's Office did not receive a written request from the executive director before the training so it did not pre-approve the expense of nearly \$800 (the executive director submitted a written request for travel to the leadership training, which the Governor's Office pre-approved).

Figure 3. The executive director didn't request or receive written approvals for 6 of 11 expenditures we evaluated.

Item	Description	Details	Amount	Governor's Office	
				Pre-Approval	Expense Approval
1	Meals and Lodging	2 hotel nights for the director to attend leadership training.	\$ 224.02	✓	✓
2	Meals and Lodging	1 hotel night for director to attend leadership training and a townhall event.	\$ 162.24	✓	✓
3	Job Related Training & Conference Registration	5 tickets for the director, 2 commissioners, and their guests to attend an NAACP banquet.	\$ 375.00	✓	✓
4	Professional Fees	Speaker fees for MLK, Jr. Day event.	\$ 300.00	✓	✓
5	Official Hospitality	Black Leadership Brunch.	\$ 2,160.00	✓	✓
6	Job Related Training & Conference Registration	6 tickets for the director, 2 commissioners, and guests to attend a MLK, Jr. Legacy and Scholarship awards dinner.	\$ 400.00	X	✓
7	Consulting Services Other	Facilitation costs for help with townhall activities.	\$ 300.00	X	✓
8	Professional Fees	Payment for consulting services to help the commission with strategic planning efforts.	\$ 999.80	X	✓
9	Professional Fees	Building rental (2 hours) for KAAAC Townhall event.	\$ 200.00	X	✓
10	Professional Fees	Tuition fee for the executive director to attend leadership training.	\$ 799.00	X	✓
11	Professional Fees	Sponsorship to the Kansas African American Museum Trailblazer fundraiser event.	\$ 1,500.00	X	✓

Source: LPA analysis of sampled expenditure documentation from KAAAC and Governor's Office staff.

**Commissioners claimed that had insufficient financial awareness and oversight, claiming part of the reason was because Knoell was not sharing relevant information.**

**Commissioners told us they had insufficient financial awareness and oversight, in part because the executive director has not shared relevant information.**

- The Governor's Office is officially responsible for approving the commission's individual expenditures.
- However best practices recommend periodic monitoring and review of expenditures within the entity, such as by the commissioners. This control ensures the commission agrees with the activities that funds are spent on. This is especially important in light of the available discretionary grant funds described earlier.
- Because of this, we expected the commission to receive periodic budget reports to provide members insight into what moneys are being spent in what areas. We also expected at least some of the members to be involved with reviewing and approving expenditures on new or non-ordinary initiatives.
- Our review of meeting minutes revealed no discussions regarding the commission's budget status or planned expenditures. Without more oversight, the director may spend money on activities that commissioners disagree with, even when the Governor's Office approves them. For example, there's no record of commission discussion for a sponsorship for the Kansas African American Museum (\$1,500). The executive director submitted the expenditure to the Governor's Office indicating it was supported by the commission, though we did not see any discussion of the sponsorship reflected in commission minutes.
- Commissioners responding to our survey told us they generally did not have sufficient oversight over its financial management, averaging a score of 2.5 (out of 5). Further, survey comments stated that commissioners had not received a written budget, financial report, or any overview of financial transactions.
- We confirmed the director receives monthly budget information for the commission from the Division of Budget. She also told us she tracks expenditures out of the grant fund. The director told us she hadn't shared that information with commissioners because they had not asked about it until

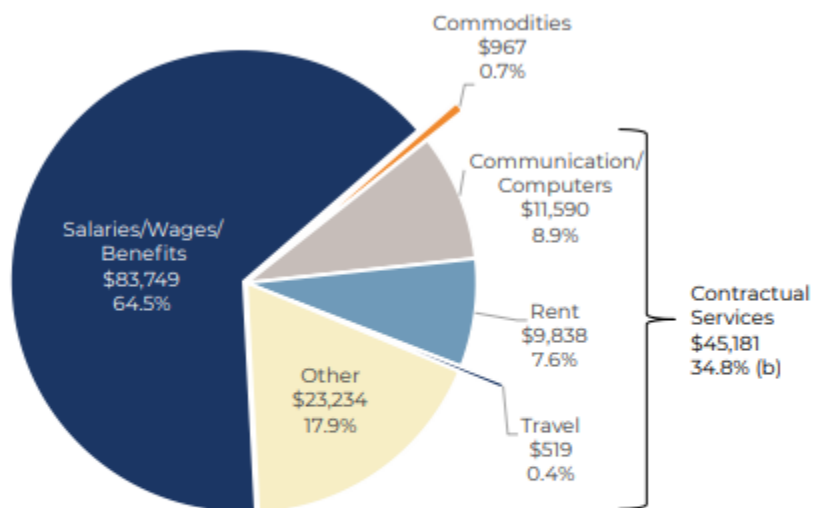
recently. The lack of a finance subcommittee likely contributes to the lack of the commission's awareness of its financial information.

**Knoell admitted that sharing the commission’s budget and financial transactions would be a good recommendation, but also cited how it was not required.**

4. The executive director should share the commission’s budget details and financial transactions (in detail or summary) with the commission periodically and on request.
  - Executive Director’s Response: While neither the KAAAC statute nor the bylaws require such reporting, and commissioners have not made requests to be briefed on the commission budget, such reporting is a good recommendation and will be taken under consideration as an item of discussion with the commissioners.

**The audit reveals that over 64% of expenditures went to Staff/Wages/Benefits.**

Figure 1. The commission’s FY 2022 expenditures totaled nearly \$130,000 (a).



(a) This includes about \$19,400 from a Kansas Health Foundation grant.

(b) Communication/computers, rent, travel, and other categories are bundled under "contractual services" for SMART accounting purposes.

Source: Expenditure data from the Statewide Management and Accounting Reporting Tool (SMART), Division of Budget, unaudited.

Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit

**As of 2023, Stacey Knoell’s Salary as ED of the Commission pays her over \$75K in Salary.**

**In 2022, the year of the audit, her Salary alone was well over half the entire budget.**

Year	First Name	Last Name	Agency	Position	Total Pay
2023	Stacey B	Knoell	Governor	Executive Director	\$75,337

Year	First Name	Last Name	Agency	Position	Total Pay
2022	Stacey B	Knoell	Governor	Executive Director	\$71,750

Year	First Name	Last Name	Agency	Position	Total Pay
2021	Stacey B	Knoell	Governor	Executive Director	\$37,423

**(Source for Legislative Audit: Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit, “Reviewing the African American Affairs Commission’s Statutory Compliance and Expenditures”, August 23, 2023; [https://www.kslpa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/B01.01-Final-Report-pdf\\_A\\_wKR.pdf](https://www.kslpa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/B01.01-Final-Report-pdf_A_wKR.pdf))**

**(Source for Knoell Salary: <https://kansasopengov.org/databank/payroll-all-state-employees/>)**

## Kansas Reflector Article about the Audit....

*TOPEKA — Senate Democrats on the Kansas Legislature’s audit committee questioned justification for examination of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission’s expenditures and adherence to procedures while asserting the House Republican who requested the audit wasn’t transparent with them about his wife’s role on the commission.*

*The exploration by staff at Legislative Post Audit, responsible for performing audits authorized by a joint House and Senate committee, delved into whether the commission complied with legal requirements when conducting commission business and when handling its \$130,000 annual budget and a \$50,000 grant from the Kansas Health Foundation.*

*The commission was created in 1997 to liaison with the governor’s office. It has four members appointed by legislative leaders and three selected by the governor.*

*“This whole thing for me has just smelled wrong from the get-go,” said Sen. Ethan Corson, a member of Legislature’s audit committee. “I feel like this has just been a massive conflict of interest from the very beginning.”*

*Corson said Rep. Patrick Penn, who also serves on the audit committee, should have disclosed to all members of the committee that Penn’s wife, Talia Penn, had been appointed to the African American Affairs Commission. Corson said Patrick Penn endorsed the audit, Talia Penn was allowed to air her grievances to auditors, and the state representative followed this week by punctuating conclusions contained in the audit report.*

*Penn, who represents a portion of Wichita, said any legislator could have discovered his wife’s role on the commission by looking at a public website. A least one other member of the Legislature’s audit committee, GOP Rep. Sean Tarwater, said he was aware Talia Penn served on the commission. Tarwater said Talia Penn was a source of complaints that generated interest in the audit. She was appointed by Senate President Ty Masterson in 2022.*

*The audit report says Penn requested the audit. He defended the resulting examination and argued it was a role of the Legislature to conduct oversight of executive branch agencies and commissions on behalf of*

taxpayers. Legislative auditors were given permission in February by the audit committee to devote 100 hours of staff time to a limited review of the commission.

“There were irregularities that we heard about from the community and from other commissioners even prior to my wife being appointed,” Penn said. “This is about the functionality of the commission and the roles of the officials therein.”

Sen. Mary Ware, a Democrat on the audit committee, said the audit appeared to target Stacey Knoell, the executive director and the only paid employee of the commission. She ran unsuccessfully as a Democrat for the Kansas Senate in 2020 and Gov. Laura Kelly announced her appointment as executive director in 2021.

“It has focused on one individual rather than a group, department, an agency, a program. It gives me pause,” Ware said. “It makes me concerned ... we might unfortunately be moving from neutral fact finding to a popularity rating on individuals.”

The audit report indicated Knoell didn’t receive prior written authorization from the governor’s office for \$4,200 in expenditures tied to the commission’s \$130,000 state budget and use of a portion of the \$50,000 grant. The six expenditures questioned by auditors were ultimately approved by the governor’s office, auditors said, including the largest of \$1,500 to support the Kansas African American Museum.

“With regard to its expenditures, the commission’s fiscal year 2023 expenditures seemed reasonable to accomplishing its duties at a high level,” the report said.

Auditors said in the report commissioners indicated they “generally did not have sufficient oversight” of the commission’s budget.

In addition, the report said Knoell didn’t compel the commission to hold elections for chairperson or secretary in the recently completed fiscal year and didn’t operate all the commission’s seven standing committees according to bylaws.

Knoell said in response to a draft of the audit that it was the nature of the auditing process to search for deficiencies. She said the draft didn’t “reflect the amount of documentation requested and provided that demonstrates how both the commission and the executive director operate in compliance with the statute.”

The office of the governor questioned the “purpose and necessity of this audit” and disagreed with several findings. The governor’s staff said election of officers and formation of committees were a duty of the full commission. The office of the governor said selection of the executive director in May 2021 was done in consultation with the commission and followed the process relied upon by Republican Gov. Sam Brownback.

In addition, the governor’s office said all expenditures reviewed by auditors “were pre-approved” despite lack of written documentation in some instances.

Sen. Caryn Tyson, a Republican on the audit committee, said she was disappointed leaders of the African American Affairs Commission weren’t present at the Capitol for public release of the audit. The subjects of legislative audits have an opportunity to review and comment in writing to drafts of audit reports. In addition, agency officials often attend audit committee meetings to speak directly to legislators on findings and recommendations.

“That is quite disappointing,” Tyson said. “I’m wondering if there are other commissions out there that may have similar issues.”

**(Source: The Kansas Reflector, August 25, 2023;**

**<https://kansasreflector.com/2023/08/25/house-senate-members-tangle-over-audit-of-kansas-african-american-affairs-commission/>)**



## KAAAC Meeting Minutes

**As Executive Director, Knoell guided \$12,000 in spending over a “barbershop initiative” that would address health disparities in the Black community.**

there was no public comment nor any special guest.

Executive Director Update: We have handed the barbershop initiative to Dr. Sharla Smith of Kansas University Medical Center. She has the research background and institutional infrastructure to run the project with efficacy. KAAAC is providing \$12,000 toward funding the project that is designed to work with barbershops to address health disparities in the Black community.

(Source: <https://www.kaaac.ks.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/78/638422149140270000>)

## Other Things In the Meeting Minutes That Might Warrant More Research

**Under Knoell, the Commission voted to make bail reform a legislative priority. At this point, I can’t tie her to a specific form of Bail Reform.**

The question at hand was how to handle adopting this slate of priorities while reflecting that the Commission may not be unanimous in support of every issue. After discussing the options, the group decided to vote on each item and record those votes in the minutes to ensure the public was aware of the difference in approach to these topics.

The votes were as follows:

Bail Reform: move to add to the list of legislative priorities - Lewis moved, McCormick seconded

Ayes: Lewis, McCormick, McRoy, Westbrook

Opposed: Penn

Veterans Benefits Bill: moved to add – McRoy moved, Penn seconded.

Aye: Lewis, McCormick, McRoy, Penn, Westbrook

None opposed

Holiday for sales tax on school supplies: moved to add – McRoy moved, McCormick seconded

Aye: Lewis, McCormick, McRoy, Penn, Westbrook

None opposed

Driver’s license fines and fees: moved Westbrook, Lewis Seconded

Aye: Lewis, McCormick, McRoy, Penn, Westbrook

None opposed

Policing training, stop data: move to add – Lewis so moved, McRoy seconded

Aye: Lewis, McCormick, McRoy, Penn, Westbrook

None opposed

Executive Director Knoell agreed to notify the Commission when/if ever giving testimony on any of the legislative priorities. If any of the Commissioners dissents, that should be noted in the testimony. It is also noted that any individual Commissioner has the freedom to testify on their own behalf as a representative of their individual constituencies.

(Source: KAAAC Meeting Minutes, January 20, 2023;

<https://www.kaaac.ks.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/70/638422149123400000>)

**The KAAAC also seemed to advocate for SB2, which authorize certain individuals with revoked driver's licenses to be eligible for restricted driving privileges**

- a. Driver's License fines and fees; SB2 – hearing 1/24, not worked

**(Source: KAAAC Meeting Minutes, March 3, 2023;**

**[https://kaaac.ks.gov/docs/librariesprovider21/board-meeting-documents/meeting-minutes/kaaac-meeting-minutes-3-3-2023.docx?sfvrsn=a680a7da\\_3](https://kaaac.ks.gov/docs/librariesprovider21/board-meeting-documents/meeting-minutes/kaaac-meeting-minutes-3-3-2023.docx?sfvrsn=a680a7da_3) &**

**[https://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023\\_24/measures/minutes/agenda\\_item\\_2023020957574159681](https://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/minutes/agenda_item_2023020957574159681))**