

Dear Kansas Governor-Elect Laura Kelly

Congratulations on your election as Kansas Governor! Though I didn't vote for you, I did listen to your acceptance speech for indications of how you would lead. I was encouraged to hear you say, "I will do everything in my power to set the right tone. I will listen every day to leaders from both parties and to the people of this state. We'll take the best ideas no matter where they come from and we'll work together despite our political labels." Until proven otherwise, I am believing that you were sincere in that and I'm trusting you'll keep your word.

With that said, I'm going to share a story that serves as an analogy. I know someone who is a very gifted writer. When she was in college, she had a mandatory writing class in which every paper written had to go through four drafts, peer review and public reading/comment, before the final draft could be submitted. Her first drafts were always scored A's – above 92%. That left little room for correction on three drafts that still had to be submitted. She was understandably frustrated when peer reviews and public comments on her papers would offer little to no concrete criticisms for improvement, as every draft submitted had to show change from the prior drafts.

One particular paper she wrote she took an unpopular stance on a controversial topic. A few peers were especially harsh in their criticisms, but unable to be concrete or give specific areas that needed correction. The professor kept redirecting the critical peer reviewers to narrow down or pinpoint their criticisms. All they could say was they "didn't like it". The girl felt like they couldn't get past their own opinions on the controversial topic and just didn't want to like it. The professor got them to narrow down their "just don't like

it" to at least a page they didn't like, and a couple peer reviewers she could even get to narrow down to a paragraph or two they didn't like. That was the closest they could get to reviewing it with constructive criticism.

The professor met with the girl after class, in which the girl's frustration was evident. The professor said, "Here's the deal. You're a better writer than they are critics. They don't have the same aptitude for the written word as you do, and therefore cannot find meaningful ways to critique it. But don't throw out their criticisms just because they can't express it in a helpful way. That's why I was trying to help them pinpoint the page or paragraph(s) that didn't sit well with them. Look at those spots in your paper again, and see if they can't be smoothed out or reworded or something. Don't throw out their criticism just because they can't express it effectively." The girl was humbled, and it was a lesson she never forgot. She was actually able to reword and rewrite the sections that had vague criticisms and on the second peer review, the criticisms were recanted.

The lesson in this is this: we lead in our strengths. Yet criticism highlights weakness. If we throw it out, we lose the ability to be sharpened. I think what you were saying is you're open to those criticisms, those voices of dissent that counter your narrative. If that be the case, please consider the following.

I'm a native Kansan, born here, raised here, lived a couple stints in Colorado and Texas, and landed here to raise my family. I love this state. I love the simplicity of nature in Kansas, the hard work ethic of the people, and the ability to self-govern. I love that you can pretty much live to your convictions here in Kansas and that Kansans by and large have a live and let live attitude. I love that Kansas is affordable to live in and raise a family in, and is central enough that I can see most of the rest of the nation without too much trouble. Kansas is an oasis, a hidden treasure. You said

your campaign was “guided by a spirit to put our families first... that is what will guide me as your governor as well.”

You also said that means a “laser focus on responding to your [Kansans] priorities.” [I hope that doesn’t just mean those who voted for you?] If you will govern our state by recognizing the differences in priorities for Kansans, you could be one of Kansas’s most successful governors. Since you said that means “cooperation, compromise and bipartisanship,” I sincerely hope you are able to recognize the conservative values that have kept Kansans voting conservatively (three counties excepted) for pretty much its entire history.

Because Kansas has some financial and economic challenges before it, I highly recommend a [new book](#) out by a fascinating woman from the banking industry who compiled a twenty year research project for understanding people’s decision making process in spending, investing and managing money. She ultimately found out those tendencies paralleled into political leanings and persuasions. Because you’re willing to cooperate, compromise and incorporate bipartisanship, the information could be quite useful. She found that one type of person is a builder, and the other a manager – to varying degrees. The reason President Trump has been so successful at quickly turning the American economy around, can be found in the pages of this book. And the reason we need the other side of the (political) aisle to keep the economy alive can also be found in this book. Conservatives build, liberals manage. We need both. Conservatives take risks and need liberty to take those risks. Liberals manage the risks with numbers, and consequently make a lot of rules for managing. If not careful, a lopsided approach locks progress. I am happy to send you a copy of this book.

When you said, “We’re going to make sure our schools prepare our children for a changing economy,” recognizing that a vast number of Americans are benefitting under the positive economic changes in America today will help a large percentage

of Kansans know you're serious about being bipartisan.

The role of governor is, in many ways, even more important than the role of the POTUS. What is determined in our local and regional politics affect us more daily than the national and international arena. If we can actually restore the rule of law and follow the Constitution as it was written, states would wield more authority than the federal government, like they're supposed to. This is what can make being a citizen of Kansas so liberating ... or so oppressive. Let's build Kansas and make it better.

In the area of education, of which you are demonstrably passionate about, putting the authority back into the hands of local school boards would enable parents to have a greater say in the public education of their children. If Kansas could instill a hunger and thirst for knowledge, and depart from the indoctrination that our politicized educational system has become, we could lead the nation in true change and set an example for others to see. Let's stop telling the students what to think, and teach them instead how to think critically. Let's get social agendas and political agendas out of education and get back to building stronger, quicker minds.

Throwing more money in a broken system will not be the answer. (Consider restructuring or recreating a system that actually works, where the educators/teachers get paid a fair and reasonable salary and the administrators are not being paid exorbitant luxury salaries; where students actually learn and retain in constructive and meaningful ways information that is actually useful and builds knowledge, and are not given indoctrinated data points to regurgitate on a test that qualifies or disqualifies them for funding.)

Is the goal to equip and train generations for the future? Or is it to create a work force that is managed?

Please keep in mind that there's a substantial conservative base in Kansas. We love our freedom, we love our children, and we love our God. Some of us have read the Constitution, know what it says, and expect that to be the final say. And some of us actually read our Bibles and attempt to live lives that bring honor to God. While you claim that Kansans wanted a change so they elected you, please humbly remember you didn't get 50% of the vote, and there's still a significant population of Kansans that are tired of being taxed to death, told to embrace behaviors that contradict their beliefs and consciences, and reject socialism. If you can work with these Kansans, you can see success and Kansas can progress.

While you're endorsed by Emily's List, have received funding from Planned Parenthood, and have on your platform that you want to make sure women "have access to reproductive healthcare, including birth control", please keep in mind conservative Kansans hold the sanctity of human life above any laws of convenience. If you're really endorsing putting "families first", let's not hypocritically endorse the murder of our babies at the same time.

Some of us support political candidates based on the character of the person, and less on the policies. Kris Kobach's concession speech was humble and self-abasing. He recognized the voices he stood for, thanked those Kansans, and more beautifully, recognized God. He conceded his election as governor was not God's will at this time. By proxy, that implies your election is God's will.

You have an opportunity to implement strategies and policies that can foster positive growth for ALL Kansans. In some circles, you've been accused of being deceitful and a socialist. This may very well be hateful rhetoric, I don't know. I was encouraged by your words I've quoted above, but I, and thousands of other Kansans, will be waiting to see if your actions support such. I'm willing to compromise and cooperate for the good of our Kansas community, and yet not

bend on the things that really matter. While I did not vote for you, you are still my governor. I want your success so my state succeeds.

Perhaps your aptitude for governing will exceed your critics' ability to express their criticisms in a helpful manner. Should this happen, maybe you can still expend energy on the critique in case there's something that can be bettered. God bless you; God bless Kansas, and God bless America.

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E-Mail Ms. Smallback: M.Smallback@cox.net