

# Experience helps Ballard land position

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State Rep. Barbara Ballard, D-Lawrence, landed a spot earlier this month on the Appropriations Committee in the Kansas House of Representatives.

Ballard, director of the Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center at the University of Kansas, said her four years of seniority had helped in the appointment. Now in her third term, Ballard has gained respect and praise from colleagues on both sides.

The Appropriations Committee recommends spending guidelines to the Legislature for all state offices, agencies and adjunct organizations.

Rep. Phil Kline, R-Overland Park, said he was glad to have Ballard on the appropriating panel.

"I consider her a very level-headed person," Kline said.

The ranking member of the committee, Rep. Henry Helgerson, D-Wichita, echoed Kline's praise.

"I think Barbara brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the committee that will be very beneficial to all members," Helgerson said.

Ballard said her diverse background was beneficial in her new role.

"Having served on a variety of committees before is extremely helpful," she said.

Members of Ballard's staff at the University thought she was skilled in legislative and administrative duties.

Rachel Lee, Lawrence graduate student, has worked at the women's resource center for more than four years and said she had grown accustomed to the absence of her supervisor as the legislative session got under way, but she said work at the center had changed little.

"It's still pretty much the same," Lee said. "She calls in several times a day from the Legislature and stops in often in the evening when she comes back."



Barbara Ballard

Ballard is now on unpaid leave from her job at the center.

Regents guidelines prevent University employees from holding political office simultaneously with a University position.

Before the session, she developed an outline for programming and goals during her absence. She meets with her staff regularly to ensure that things run smoothly.

"Even though I'm on leave, I still have a job, and I oversee things," Ballard said. "When I come back, it's like I've never been gone."

Lee said she thought that students benefited from Ballard's position and that Ballard made government seem less intimidating.

"I think that students feel like Topeka is a little bit more accessible because of her," Lee said.