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*Dave Owen*  
*ME 9*

STATE OF KANSAS  
POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Senator Bob Dole - Bob Dole, at this point in time, is clearly the most identifiable and popular Republican in the state of Kansas. Having just gone through a very difficult campaign, the Senator has assembled, with the help of former Lt. Governor Dave Owen, the largest and most viable political organization in the state. Most Republican leaders look to him for leadership in party oriented matters. The Senator is in the process of establishing regional offices throughout the state and his rapport with the constituents should continue to grow over the next few years.

Senator James B. Pearson - Senator Pearson has a substantial following in the state, although not nearly of the magnitude of Senator Bob Dole. Senator Pearson has never participated very actively in Republican party affairs, taking a much less partisan role than Senator Dole has taken. At this point in time, Senator Pearson has very little organization of his own and until very recently, his field offices were operated at an extremely low key. However, assuming that the Senator plans to run for re-election in 1978, it would be reasonable to assume that he will begin organizing within the next year.

Governor Robert Bennett - Governor Bennett was elected by a very narrow margin in the last general election, after having served in the State Senate for several terms. At the beginning of his last term, he was elected President of the Senate. He has an excellent rapport with the Legislature and particularly, the legislative leadership. Bennett was elected primarily on a back-lash vote against his Democratic opponent, former Attorney General Vern Miller, and has very little in the way of a political organization of his own. However, with the vast number of appointments that the Governor can make and recognizing it has been eight years since a Republican has occupied the Governor's seat in Kansas, it would seem that Bennett's popularity and political influence can only grow in the next four years. Bennett owes a great deal of his victory to Jack Ranson, the Chairman of the Republican Party in Kansas, and by virtue of that political debt, will be very cooperative in party matters.

Jack Ranson, Chairman of the Republican Party - Jack Ranson



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is an outstanding Chairman and pulled off a near miracle in the last election campaign. At the beginning of the 1974 election, the Republican Party situation in Kansas could not have been bleaker. It appeared that the Democrats could easily win the Governor's seat, retain the 2nd District Congressional seat given up by Bill Roy, and defeat Bob Dole with Bill Roy in the Senate race. The results speak for themselves. The Republican Party captured all of the state offices with the exception of Attorney General and Treasurer, and Bob Dole was returned to the U. S. Senate. We did, however, lose the 2nd District Congressional seat to Martha Keys. Ranson has excellent rapport with party leaders and with those people who have in the past financed the election campaigns in Kansas. Ranson can be counted on for support by President Ford at the convention. He owes his position as Republican State Chairman to former Lt. Governor Dave Owen among others.

Kansas Leadership League - During the last general election campaign, an organization was formed, under the leadership of Jack Ranson, called the Kansas Leadership League. This organization now numbers approximately 80 members, who each contribute \$2,500.00 annually, to be used as the Leadership League deems fit in election campaigns. The organization is composed of the most influential political activists in the state, who have the wherewithal to finance campaigns. The Leadership League played an important role in both the Dole victory and the Bennett victory in 1974. The organization is now chaired by Howard Wilkens, a young entrepreneur from Wichita. Howard is a most capable individual and the Leadership League will continue to grow and function with more political clout under his guidance.

Huck Boyd, Republican National Committeeman - Huck Boyd has been a very hard and faithful party worker in Kansas for many years. His political allegiance is primarily to Bob Dole. Huck is one of the most knowledgeable sources for political background in the state; however, he has attained an age that is beginning to render him less and less effective in party matters. It is very likely that he will choose not to run for re-election to the position in 1976, or be defeated in the race for re-election.

Beth Rogers, Republican National Committeewoman - Beth Rogers



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is also very active and effective in party circles over the past few years. She is the wife of State Senator Richard Rogers from Manhattan, Kansas, who serves as President of the Kansas Senate. Senator Rogers is one of the leading candidates for a federal judgeship and should he be appointed, Mrs. Rogers will resign. She would probably face a serious challenge in the next re-election in any event.

Minority Groups - Minority groups in Kansas are primarily located in the Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita areas. They have had very little impact on the outcome of elections in the past. However, the Republican Party is working extremely hard to gather them into the fold. At this point in time, the party seems to be very successful in the Jewish Community and the Mexican-American Community and relatively ineffective in the Negro Community, with the exception of a very few black leaders. Senator Bob Dole seems to have the best rapport with minority groups in the state.

Economic Situation - Kansas is, of course, an agricultural oriented state with wheat and beef being the primary economic factors. The aircraft industry in the Wichita area causes rather dramatic economic swings in that locality, but has minimal effect in the rest of the state. Kansas is not experiencing, at this time, many of the unemployment problems other states are faced with. Unemployment is so low, as a matter of fact, that Kansas is not on the list of states receiving federal grants for unemployment compensation.

Labor Situation - Kansas has a right-to-work law, and it is a very popular issue in the state. Union support is centered in Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita. Union members, although relatively small in comparison to the total state population, are highly organized and effective. They played an important role in Bill Roy's close race against Bob Dole and were one of the major reasons that Bob Docking was elected Governor of Kansas for four consecutive terms as a Democrat. If pressed on the issue in this state, a politician would be wise to side with the right-to-work organization. The partial proof of this can be born out in the recent Senate election in which Bob Dole's campaign chairman, former Lt. Governor Dave Owen, made that a key issue in the campaign.



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Delegate Selection - Under the new rule of the Republican National Committee, Kansas will have 34 delegates to the National Convention, pending the outcome of the Rippon Society's suit. Kansas has no state law, nor any Party By-laws, covering the selection of delegates. Traditionally, however, they have been selected in the following manner, bearing in mind that up until now, Kansas has had 20 delegates and, as you know, has 5 Congressional Districts. Two delegates have been selected from each of the districts at a District Caucus. Another delegate has been recommended by the district to the State Caucus for ratification. The remaining 5 delegates have been selected at large at the State Convention. State Chairman Jack Ranson intends to codify this traditional procedure sometime this year.

Overview - At the present time, President Ford does not have the average voter of Kansas convinced that he is the man to do the job as President of the United States. On the other hand, there is no readily identifiable alternative that causes any serious threat to the President's position. Party leadership seems to be philosophically aligned with a person like Ronald Reagan; however, they think very highly of President Ford and understand the political realities of an incumbent president running for re-election. It would seem that the time for President Ford is now and that delegate strength can be lined up through contact with party leadership in the next few months. The most viable organization to contact at the present time is the Kansas Leadership League and Chairman Jack Ranson. President Ford is perceived to be a dedicated public servant and honest man by the majority of the Kansas constituency. With that image already created, regardless of the many issues that they do not agree with the President on, coupled with his incumbency, President Ford should be able to put Kansas in his column with some strategic contacts being made in the next few months.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 5, 1976

*Please  
Dex  
JM*

MEMORANDUM FOR: DICK CHENEY  
THRU: JACK MARSH *JM*  
MAX FRIEDERSDORF *M.F.*  
FROM: CHARLES LEPPERT, JR. *CLJ.*  
SUBJECT: Rep. Keith Sebelius (R. - Kansas)

Rep. Keith Sebelius says that a recent poll taken at the Kansas State Fair from September 18 to 26, 1976, showed the following results:

	<u>September 18</u>	<u>September 26</u>
Ford	50%	45%
Carter	45%	37%
Undecided	5%	18%
Sebelius	70%	60%
Opponent	21%	27%
Undecided	9%	13%



*[original in folder "Butz, Earl" in box 16]*