

# THE ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY UPDATE  
FROM THE KANSAS  
LEGISLATURE

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## Intro

Last week continued much the same as the first week of the session, with committees holding informational hearings and the House budget subcommittees continuing to work through agency budgets. However, a few committees have begun to hold bill hearings and pass legislation out of committee. Behind the scenes, the effects of the shortened session can be felt, but the pace of official committee work is like that of recent sessions. Some committee chairs have voiced their enthusiasm to get to work, but revisors continue to struggle to draft the immense number of bill requests they have received, with over 180 bills being introduced already.

This week did mark both Chambers going on General Orders to pass the rules and joint rules for each chamber. The rules are much the same as the previous session, but the Senate did alter the Senate President's power to remove and appoint chairpersons, vice chairs, and ranking members. The President now must have a vote of three out of five in a committee of the Senate President, Vice President, Majority Leader, Assistant Majority Leader, and the Majority Whip to install a replacement. A floor amendment to the proposed rules clarified that a replacement would have to be supported by the President, ensuring the President's control of committee leaders. Meanwhile, the House removed the "midnight rule," which was created to keep the chamber from working late into the night after the passing of former state Rep. Bob Bethell in a car accident while leaving Topeka after a night of floor work. The rule had become ineffective over the last few years, frequently being suspended by a majority vote of the chamber, usually after a lengthy debate delayed time even further.

## Budget

Budget subcommittees have begun reporting on some of the more straightforward state agency budgets while they continue to review some of the larger agencies' requests.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee received an update on the child daycare assistance tax credit from the Department of Revenue on Thursday. The report revealed that fewer than five entities had claimed the credit in each of the last five tax years. The Committee also heard from the Children's Cabinet, which reported that \$54.4M in grants had been awarded, creating over 3,000 new licensed childcare slots and 28 new childcare facilities.

The House Subcommittee on Social Services Budget heard the Department of Children and Families budget on Thursday. Secretary Howard focused on maintaining reappropriations for FY2025 and enhancements to improve DCF's services in FY2026, including funds for eight behavioral health intervention teams to serve youth experiencing frequent placement disruptions.

## Tax

The Senate Tax Committee passed out several tax measures on Wednesday, including SCR1603, on a 6-3 vote. That measure would cap property appraisals at 3% for tax purposes via constitutional amendment and was opposed in committee by the Kansas Farm Bureau and the Kansas Livestock Association. It would need a two-thirds majority of the vote to pass the Senate, which it received last year, but will likely face opposition from the House, where it died in committee last session. The committee also passed SB35, which would eliminate the state's 1.5- mill levy that funds maintenance and renovations of state buildings, including 1 mill for higher education buildings. State general fund dollars would be used instead. If passed, the bill would equate to about \$56M less in property taxes in FY 2026.

On Wednesday, the House Tax Committee also held a hearing on one of its property tax solutions. HB2011 would reduce the statewide school finance mill levy from 20 to 18.5 mills. The bill received testimony from six proponents and only one opponent, but there are concerns over the fiscal note, which is estimated at \$67.4M in FY 2026 before climbing to \$266.7M in FY 2030. This year, many options are on the table for property tax cuts, but the GOP is still looking for which path to take to fulfill its promise of relief.

Introduced bills of note:

SB69 - Extending by five years the loan repayment program and income tax credit for rural opportunity zones.

SB72 - Providing for transferability of Kansas housing investor tax credits from the year that the credit was originally issued.

HB2083 - Providing a property tax exemption for new energy storage systems and excluding new energy storage systems from the commercial and industrial machinery and equipment exemption.

HB2081 - Providing a sales tax exemption for community pharmacies serving medically underserved individuals and families.

## Elections

The Senate Committee on Fed and State Affairs passed SB4 last week. The legislation would require the return of advance voting ballots by 7:00 PM on election day, eliminating the current three-day grace period for advanced ballots to arrive. The bill has been brought up in previous sessions following the 2020 election and accusations of voter fraud but has failed to make it across the finish line thus far. Earlier in the week proponents brought up issues with the USPS properly postmarking mail and the prospect of quicker tabulation times. The opposition testified the bill would only make it harder to vote for those who cannot get off work for election day and that thousands of Kansans' votes are currently received during the grace period. The Secretary of State's Office testified neutrally on the bill, requesting that remote drop boxes would remain available if it becomes law.

House Elections also passed out a bill, HB2020, which would require a quarterly report from the director of the division of vehicles listing the names and addresses of certain noncitizens who have been issued a driver's license to the Secretary of State. The bill would codify current practice between the Division of Motor Vehicles and the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State cannot directly remove someone from voter rolls but would direct counties to remove the individuals.

## Utilities

SB11 was given a hearing in Senate Utilities on Tuesday. The bill would require the state 911 board to establish requirements for 911 telecommunicators to receive training and continuous education in telecommunicator-cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Six conferees were present to support the bill, while the Kansas Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police Association offered opposition. The Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police Association protested over the cost of training employees, estimated at \$55 a year per employee. Proponents likened the measure to other required pieces of training that are essential skills for the job, such as driver licensing.

Introduced bills of note:

SB57 - Requiring certain state agencies, counties, cities and political subdivisions to reimburse the owner or operator of communications or video service facilities for the costs to modify or relocate such facilities for certain road and highway projects.

# Health

The Kansas Chamber is looking to increase the number of interstate compacts to address workforce shortages and introduced several bills last week, including [HB2068](#) Enacting the cosmetology compact to provide interstate practice privileges. [HB2069](#) Enacting the school psychologist licensure compact to provide interstate practice privileges for school psychologists. And [HB2070](#) Enacting the dietitian licensure compact to provide interstate practice privileges for dietitians. There are likely more compacts on the way, and they could eventually be merged into a single licensing compact package.

The Association of Community Health Centers of Kansas presented to the Senate Health Committee on Thursday, citing growing waitlists, which both FQHCs and CMHCs are experiencing. Centers are required to provide certain services but also continue to struggle with recruiting an adequate workforce.

Introduced bills of note:

[SB67](#) - Authorizing registered nurse anesthetists to engage in independent practice and prescribe drugs and prohibiting registered nurse anesthetists from performing an abortion or prescribing drugs to induce an abortion.

[SB41](#) - Adding advanced practice registered nurses to the definition of healthcare provider for purposes of the healthcare provider insurance availability act.

# Local Government

[SB37/HB2025](#) would both repeal the three-mile extraterritorial planning and zoning authority for cities. Hearings are scheduled in both the House and Senate local government committees on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively. Although there has not been a hearing yet, counties, cities, and utilities have all begun to voice concerns. Along with cities' concerns about the ability

to grow, counties and utilities are hesitant to reopen complex and often long-standing agreements on infrastructure and regulatory practices. Legislators have remained open to the idea of sending the matter to an interim committee to gather more information on the complex issue.

Introduced bills of note:

[HB2088](#) - Enacting the fast-track permits act to require local governments to meet specified deadlines for issuing building permits and other required approvals for real estate development.

[SCR1605](#) - Proposing a constitutional amendment to grant counties home rule powers.

## Finance & Business

An informational hearing on Paid Family and Medical Leave is scheduled for next Thursday, January 30, in the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee. Informational hearings often precede action, and it's anticipated there will be efforts to impose paid family leave requirements on Kansas businesses. Similar requirements have been passed in other states, but businesses continue to advocate for control and would oppose a mandate.

Introduced bills of note:

HB2066 - Requiring business entities and public employers to register and use the e-verify program for employment purposes and prohibiting income tax deductions for wages and remuneration paid to unauthorized aliens.

HB2089 - Enacting the consumer inflation reduction and tax fairness act and exempting the portion of a credit card transaction constituting a tax or gratuity from assessment of the fee charged by the card issuer.

SB51 - Providing a sales tax exemption for the construction or remodeling of a qualified data center in Kansas and the purchase of data center equipment, eligible data center costs and certain labor costs to qualified firms that commit to a minimum investment of at least \$250,000,000 and meet new Kansas jobs and other requirements.

HB2086 - Adjusting the KPERs 3 dividend interest credit by lowering the dividend interest credit threshold to 5% and increasing the dividend share to 80%.

## Corrections & Judiciary

On Thursday, the Council for State Governments Justice Center delivered a presentation to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice, focusing on ways to improve behavioral health outcomes for young people involved in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system. The presentation emphasized the state's shortage of community-based behavioral health services to address the needs of this population. The committee was not entirely on board with all of the recommendations, with several members voicing support for keeping secure placement options for chronic runaways and mid-level and repeat offenders. The Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee presented on the Evidence-Based Program Account earlier in the week. The account, which had not been distributing funds for a number of years, has now allocated \$37,097,661 of its original \$52,575,256, with a \$15,477,595 projected balance at the end of FY 2025.

Introduced bills of note:

HB2061 - Including aboveground and belowground lines, cables and wires in the definition of a critical infrastructure facility used for telecommunications or video services for the crimes of trespassing on a critical infrastructure facility and criminal damage to a critical infrastructure facility.

SB54 - Limiting discovery and disclosure of third-party litigation funding agreements in certain circumstances and requiring reporting of such agreements to the judicial council for study.

## Child Welfare

Introduced bills of note:

HB2076 - Reducing the authorized amount of days that a child may be placed in a secure facility and eliminating the court's option to extend such authorization.

## Federal & State

Introduced bills of note:

SB56 - Authorizing home delivery of alcoholic liquor and cereal malt beverage by licensed retailers, drinking establishments and third-party delivery services.

## Water & Agriculture

Introduced bills of note:

SB58 - Modifying the requirements and allocations for multi-year flex accounts.

HB2064 - Removing the current solid waste permit exception for the disposal of solid waste generated by drilling oil and gas wells through the practice of land-spreading.

## Important Dates

Important Dates:

February 5th - Last day for individuals to introduce bills

February 7th - Last day for non-exempt committees to introduce bills

February 17th - Last day for committees to meet before Turnaround Day

February 20th – (Turnaround) Last day for non-exempt bills to pass original chamber

## The Week Ahead

The following bills are scheduled to receive hearings this week.

Wednesday, January 29

9:00 AM House Local Gov

Hearing on HB2025: Repealing the three-mile extraterritorial planning and zoning authority for cities.

10:30 AM Senate Judiciary

Hearing on SB61: Requiring an electric public utility to pay a landowner's attorney fees when a party appeals the appraisers' award and the jury renders a verdict that is greater than the appraisers' award in an eminent domain action.

Thursday, January 30

8:30 AM Senate Health

Hearing on [SB31](#): Updating certain provisions of the Kansas dental practices act relating to dentist information requested by patients, in-person practice requirements in dental office using licensee's name, unprofessional conduct and patient complaints.

8:30 AM Senate Ag and Natural Resources

Hearing on [SB58](#): Modifying the requirements and allocations for multi-year flex accounts.

9:30 AM Senate Local Gov

Hearing on [SB37](#): Repealing the three-mile extraterritorial planning and zoning authority for cities.

10:30 AM Senate Judiciary

Hearing on [SB61](#): Requiring an electric public utility to pay a landowner's attorney fees when a party appeals the appraisers' award and the jury renders a verdict that is greater than the appraisers' award in an eminent domain action.

1:30 PM Senate Commerce

Hearing on [SB51](#): Providing a sales tax exemption for the construction or remodeling of a qualified data center in Kansas and the purchase of data center equipment, eligible data center costs and certain labor costs to qualified firms that commit to a minimum investment of at least \$250,000,000 and meet new Kansas jobs and other requirements.

3:30 PM House Elections

Hearing on [HB2021](#): Authorizing the secretary of state, in consultation with county election officers, to adopt rules and regulations for the use of remote ballot boxes.

3:30 PM House Tax

Hearing on [HB2083](#): Providing a property tax exemption for new energy storage systems and excluding new energy storage systems from the commercial and industrial machinery and equipment exemption.

## Helpful Links to Monitor the Action

[Listen](#) live to committee hearings or playback past hearings.

[Watch](#) the House and Senate floor debates via YouTube.

[Find](#) the daily calendars.

[Search](#) for a bill.

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