

THE ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY UPDATE
FROM THE KANSAS
LEGISLATURE

ADVOCACY THAT WORKS

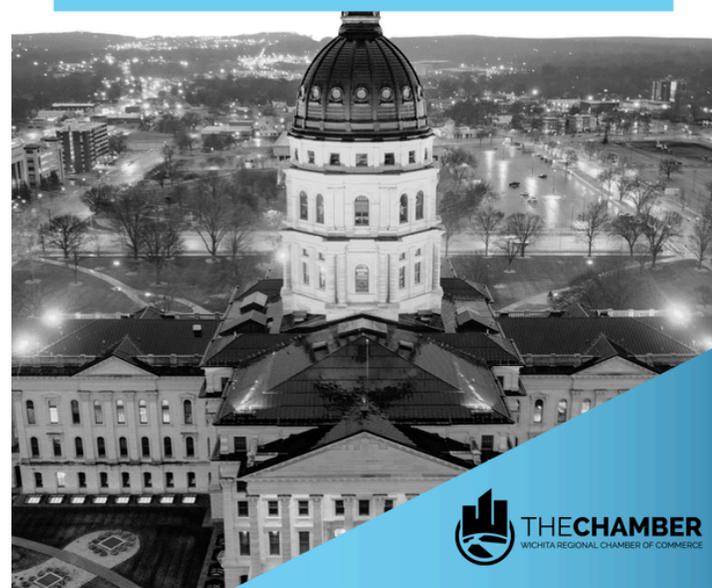


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WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Intro

We've officially passed turnaround, and today marks the 43rd day of the session, putting us just days away from the halfway point on Wednesday. Last week, both chambers were on the floor all day Tuesday and Wednesday ahead of Thursday's deadline. The Senate wrapped up its work and adjourned on Wednesday after working roughly 60 bills during the week. The House remained in Topeka on Thursday to finish its workload, ultimately adjourning that afternoon after acting on well over 100 bills. Non-exempt bills that were not passed by at least one chamber are now considered "dead" for the biennium, although in Topeka, nothing is ever truly dead. Senate President Ty Masterson (R-Andover) blessed 23 bills last week, while it does not appear Speaker Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) blessed any bills at the last minute.

The legislature is off today to give staff and the Revisors time to process the influx of legislation, with committee work resuming tomorrow. Looking ahead, March 17 is the next key deadline and is the last day for nonexempt committees to meet, followed by First Adjournment on March 27.

PBM Reform Clears Senate

A bipartisan majority in the Senate passed [SB360](#), the major pharmacy benefit manager reform bill, that according to proponents, is aimed at increasing state oversight and curbing practices viewed as anti-competitive and harmful to local pharmacies. The legislation gives the insurance commissioner stronger regulatory authority, eliminates spread pricing, requires greater transparency in drug pricing and reimbursements, and mandates fees to better support pharmacies, especially independent and rural pharmacies, which lack negotiation power with the PBMs. Supporters argued that PBMs dominate the market, inflate costs through practices like spread pricing, and disadvantage independent pharmacies, claims that have recently been reinforced by the Federal Trade Commission, a U.S. House committee report, and other states.

The bill passed 32-8 despite opposition from PBMs, insurers, and some business groups who warned it could increase health insurance costs and distort the market. Critics also objected to the required dispensing fee and broader state intervention. However, proponents across both parties emphasized the need to protect local pharmacies and restore fairness, arguing the current system is broken and that Kansas cannot wait on federal action. The bill now moves to the House, where its path forward is less certain.

Ban on Cell Phones Passes House

The House passed [SB281](#) 75-48 to ban cellphone use in both public and accredited private schools, sending it to the Senate, with Governor Laura Kelly (D) signaling support. The bill requires schools to adopt policies prohibiting student cellphone use during the school day, mandating devices be turned off and stored, and establishing enforcement measures, with limited exceptions for special education needs, parental contact, and off-campus lunch.

The debate centered on whether the mandate should apply to private schools and whether it infringes on local control. Supporters argued that cellphones are a major disruption to learning and student well-being, leading to growing suicide rates, and that a uniform policy should apply to all students. Opponents raised concerns about setting a precedent for government overreach into private institutions and about preserving local school district authority. There was both bipartisan opposition and support for the measure on the floor, while the mirror bill stalled in the Senate due to concern for private schools.

Designated Bathrooms Veto Override Completed

The Legislature voted to override Governor Kelly's veto of [SB244](#), a bill requiring restrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities in government buildings to be used based on biological sex, and mandating that driver's licenses and birth certificates reflect sex assigned at birth. The Senate approved the override 31-9, followed by an 87-37 vote in the House, allowing the bill to become law. The measure also establishes enforcement provisions, including fines for government entities that fail to comply and penalties for repeat violations by individuals. The bill was split almost along party lines, with only Mark Schreiber (R-Emporia) breaking with his party to oppose the override. Legislative leaders framed the bill as a necessary step to protect privacy and safety, particularly for women and girls, and to establish clear, consistent standards.

Budget

The House Committee on Appropriations passed out their budget over a week ago, on Friday, February 13, concluding their budget work for the year, however they did meet at the rail of the Capitol rotunda on Wednesday to allow for the introduction of bills. Despite intending to finish on Thursday, the 12, the Senate Committee on Ways and Means had to meet on Monday and Tuesday last week to complete their budget work. During those meetings, several last-minute provisos were adopted, including significant changes to distributions from the Kansas Lottery Fund. The previous proposal to set the distribution cap at \$16 million was removed due to concerns it would not leave enough funds available for the Attracting Professional Sports Teams fund, and instead, a broader \$80 million lottery cap structure was set, directing \$8 million to clubhouse funding with the remaining funds flowing to waivers and HCBS.

The Senate committee also deleted \$5 million SGF from the Blueprint for Literacy in the KBOR budget and removed \$10 million from the two-year student success initiative, leaving \$500,000 SGF for FY 2027. Additional provisos included deleting language that would have prohibited a new sports wagering contract in FY 2027 and restoring \$2 million in funding for Level Up Kansas by withdrawing a previous \$1 million cut. Funding for long-term care nursing home facilities was restored to \$20 million. Finally, the budget moved \$125,000 in FY 2026 from the Board of Indigent Defense Services' IT security to cover expert witness costs. Now, both chambers wait for the budget bills to be brought to the floor.

Tax

Very few bills from either the House or Senate tax committees made it to the floor ahead of turnaround. Notably, [HB2745](#), the House leadership's property tax plan, was worked in committee and passed out favorably on Monday with several amendments. Most significantly, the bill was revised to replace the election mechanism to approve tax revenue growth over 3% with a protest-petition process requiring signatures from at least 10 percent of voters in the most recent presidential election within the taxing jurisdiction. If triggered, the provision would limit property tax revenues to the prior year's level, adjusted for inflation, new construction, and certain bond obligations.

These changes move the bill closer to last year's [HB2396](#), the Astra plan, which passed the House 115-6. The current strategy remains to advance HB2745 alongside the Senate's [SCR1616](#), which proposes a 3% valuation cap. The underlying theory of the tax chairs is that pairing a valuation cap with a voter-driven mechanism to limit spending offers the most viable path forward for property tax relief in the state. Only a few notable tax bills were worked prior to turnaround:

[HB2408](#) - Providing that leased ground owned by a county-recognized community land trust shall be considered as a factor in determining fair market value for property tax purposes. Passed 124-0.

[SB368](#) - Enacting the health care sharing ministries tax deduction act to provide a subtraction modification for qualified health care sharing expenses paid by a qualified individual and certain qualified health care shares received by a qualified individual. Passed 33-7.

Health

HB2368 - Providing for the licensure of anesthesiologist assistants. Motion to recommend favorably for passage failed 53-63.

HB2555 - Requiring grant applications, expenditure information, reports and other documentation concerning the rural health transformation program to be presented and provided to the state finance council, house of representatives committee on appropriations, senate committee on ways and means and legislative budget committee. Passed 124-0.

SB408 - Excluding a child engaging in age-appropriate independent activities from the definition of a child in need of care in the revised Kansas code for care of children. Passed 40-0.

SB379 - Authorizing the state 911 board to establish a statewide program for emergency medical dispatch and telecommunicator cardiopulmonary resuscitation, medical direction and quality assurance services. Passed 37-3.

HB2329 - Increasing the cumulative detention limit for juvenile offenders and criminal penalties for juvenile offenders who use a firearm in the commission of an offense or who are repeat offenders, providing for increased placement of offenders in non-foster home beds in youth residential facilities, requiring the secretary of corrections to pay for the costs associated with such placements and authorizing the secretary to make expenditures from the evidence-based programs account of the state general fund moneys to contract for such beds. Passed 30-10.

HB2521 - Expanding the Kansas tort claims act to include child placement agencies that contract with the secretary for children and families. Passed 84-38.

HB2703 - Enacting the Kansas health insurance affordability transparency act to require a report specifying the financial impact to covered individuals resulting from the passage of certain health insurance legislation. Passed 87-35.

HB2564 - Providing for the election of alternative payment methods by a dental provider and allowing such payment method to remain in force for the duration of a contract with a dental benefit plan. Passed 119-3.

HB2765 - Adding and removing certain substances in schedules I, III and IV of the uniform controlled substances act and making conforming changes to the criminal code definition of fentanyl-related controlled substance. This bill was passed over and was stricken from the calendar. It is now dead, since it failed to pass the first chamber before turnaround.

HB2676 - Permitting a pharmacist to initiate therapy for certain conditions consistent with the pharmacist's education, training and experience. Passed 95-27.

HB2218 - Amending the definition of "psilocybin" in the uniform controlled substances act to exclude the pharmaceutical composition of crystalline polymorph psilocybin and adding crystalline polymorph psilocybin to schedule IV of the uniformed controlled substance act. This bill was passed over and stricken from the calendar. However, the intent is to include the language of the bill in a conference committee report at a later date.

HB2736 - Requiring hospitals to screen all patients for eligibility for such hospital's financial assistance program or charity care policy. Failed 20-102 after members spoke against the legislation.

HB2250 - Substitute for HB 2250 - Defining emergency opioid antagonist as including an expired emergency opioid antagonist for a person rendering aid to another in reasonable need of medical assistance. Passed 120-1.

HB2740 - Adopting compounding standards established by the United States pharmacopeia and allowing for exemptions from such standards. Passed 122-0.

HB2688 - Providing that a nondisclosure agreement by any party in an action related to childhood sexual abuse or human trafficking shall not be judicially enforceable in a dispute involving childhood sexual abuse or human trafficking allegations or claims. Passed 122-0.

SB431 - Establishing the remote practice of pharmacy, requiring certain conditions for such practice and limiting activities performed under such practice. Passed 40-0.

SB334 - Facilitating nursing workforce development by providing education levels for instructors at nursing schools as a requirement for state approval. Passed 38-2.

SB360 - Enacting the Kansas consumer prescription protection and accountability act and providing for regulation and registration of pharmacy benefits managers. Passed 32-8. The only amendments added were those considered friendly by the carrier of the bill, Insurance Chairwoman Brenda Dietrich (R-Topeka).

HB2639 - Changing the name of juvenile crisis intervention centers to juvenile stabilization centers, modifying the intake criteria and treatment provided at such centers and transferring moneys from the evidence-based programs account of the state general fund for use at such centers. Passed 116-0.

HB2524 - Permitting the secretary for children and families to license family foster homes when certain persons reside in such home and creating an appeal process for family foster homes when licenses are not granted. Passed 122-0.

HB2320 - Authorizing children in the custody of the secretary of the department for children and families to attend school in any school district, requiring records for such students to be timely transferred between school districts and requiring a transportation plan if the child remains in the school of origin. Passed 122-0.

Labor & Economic Development

HB2346 - Substitute for HB 2346 by Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development - Establishing the Kansas sports tourism grant program administered by the secretary of commerce to provide matching grants to communities for developing and continuing sporting events, providing for funding of such grants from the state economic development initiatives fund or from the state general fund if funds are not available therefrom. Passed 95-21.

HB2737 - Enacting the taxpayer agreement act to provide for an alternative method of tax increment financing of municipal economic development projects through taxpayer agreements. Passed 110-14.

HB2602 - Establishing requirements for a portable benefit plan for independent contractors, determining types of contributions to such plans and providing a subtraction modification for Kansas income tax purposes. Passed 103-21.

HB2357 - Substitute for HB 2357 by Committee on Judiciary - Providing for the sealing and expungement of court records and consideration of mediation in eviction actions in which the underlying rental agreement is governed by the residential landlord and tenant act and providing that certain violations of this act constitute unconscionable acts or practices under the provisions of the Kansas consumer protection act. Passed 107-9.

SB375 - Enacting the proxy advisor transparency act, requiring proxy advisors to make certain disclosures when recommending an action against company management, authorizing the attorney general to investigate and take enforcement actions against violators and establishing a private right of action for a declaratory judgment or injunctive relief. Passed 31-9.

HB2507 - Removing the requirement for migratory waterfowl stamps to be validated by a signature across the face of each such stamp and increasing the fees for such stamps. Passed 122-2.

SB413 - Prohibiting counsel from suggesting an amount of damages for noneconomic loss in civil actions. Passed 29-11.

Local Government

HB2451 - Prohibiting the use of public assets by government officers and employees to advocate for or against proposed amendments to the constitution of the state of Kansas and ballot questions submitted to qualified electors. Passed 88-36.

HB2453 - Requiring applications for advance voting ballots be filed by the 14th day prior to election day, that advance voting in person be completed by 12:00 p.m. on the Sunday prior to election day, extending the time for transmittal of advance voting ballots to 22 days prior to an election and ending the time for voter registration at 23 days prior to election day. Passed 86-38.

HB2220 - Permitting local authorities with jurisdiction over city residence districts to reduce the maximum speed limit to 25 miles per hour without an engineering and traffic investigation. Passed 111-13.

HB2504 - Prohibiting cities and counties from restricting the discretion of landlords not to rent residential or commercial property on grounds including prospective tenants receipt of housing assistance or eviction or criminal history, and permitting cities and counties to prohibit discrimination by landlords on the basis of receipt of veterans benefits. Passed 84-40.

Utilities

[HB2435](#) - Substitute for HB 2435 by Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications - Authorizing natural gas public utilities to recover certain growth-related investments in the gas system reliability surcharge, increasing the cap on the amount that the monthly fixed charge may be increased for residential customers and reducing the time for the state corporation commission to act on gas system reliability surcharge filings. Passed 115-7.

[HB2647](#) - Authorizing the Kansas department of transportation to establish a statewide fiber system. Passed 116-5.

[SB380](#) - Requiring retail electric suppliers to provide nondiscriminatory rates and services to entities that provide electric vehicle charging services and prohibiting any costs and expenses associated with a retail electric supplier's electric vehicle charging stations from being recovered in electric rates. Passed 40-0.

[SB439](#) - Enacting the utility railroad crossing act and establishing a process and limitations for utilities to interact with railroad right-of-way. Blessed by being sent to Ways and Means.

The Week Ahead

The following bills are scheduled to receive hearings this week.

Monday, February 23

No Session

Tuesday, February 24

1:30PM in Senate Education

Hearing on [HB2468](#) - Electing to participate in the federal tax credit for individual contributions to scholarship granting organizations and increasing the aggregate tax credit limit on the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program.

Wednesday, February 25

9:00AM in House Federal and State Affairs

Hearing on [HB2771](#) - Establishing requirements for the county sheriff operating a jail for the enforcement of United States immigration and customs enforcement detainers, requiring municipal insurance pools to provide coverage for law enforcement that enforces federal laws, requiring the state to pay certain judgements in a federal court action, requiring the attorney general to provide representation in certain civil actions and authorizing county sheriffs to enter into certain interlocal cooperation agreements without the approval of the board of county commissioners.

9:30AM in Senate Assessment and Taxation

Hearing on [HB2377](#) - Providing that countywide retailers' sales tax is apportioned based on tangible property tax levies remain unchanged until December 31, 2026.

3:30PM in House Judiciary

Hearing on [SB358](#) - Requiring individuals convicted of certain felonies to be held without bond in the county jail until sentencing.

Thursday, February 26

9:30AM in Senate Assessment and Taxation

Hearing on [HB2440](#) - Excluding owners of oil leases from having to file request for exemption with the board of tax appeals for property tax exemptions.

Hearing on [HB2464](#) - Extending the number of years that new credits may be issued or earned for contributions to graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and employers of program graduates.

10:30AM in Senate Judiciary

Hearing on [HB2479](#) - Authorizing electronic monitoring with victim notification as a condition of release prior to trial for certain offenders charged with a domestic violence offense, domestic battery, stalking or violation of a protective order.

3:30PM in House Taxation

Hearing on [HB2757](#) - Repealing or discontinuing certain income tax credit incentives, extending the income tax credit for angel investors and aviation-related employment and providing expanded options in the high performance tax credit program for tax credit transfers and wage requirements for rural businesses.

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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