

THE ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY UPDATE
FROM THE KANSAS
LEGISLATURE

ADVOCACY THAT WORKS



In This Week's Advocate:

- Intro
- Budget
- Tax
- Conference Committee Reports
- Veto Overrides
- Failed Veto Overrides

WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



Intro

The Legislature adjourned sine die shortly after 1:30 a.m. Saturday morning, bringing the 2026 session to a close following two contentious days of final negotiations and floor debate. Lawmakers worked late into the night to resolve outstanding differences on key issues, with conference committees and leadership pushing to finalize remaining legislation and override vetoes before adjournment. The extended night underscored the typical intensity of end-of-session dynamics, with the added weight of the biennium's end and the looming departures of many long-term representatives, not the least of whom is the Speaker of the House, Representative Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita). The themes of the session remained present, with property taxes and the budget taking center stage during the veto session.

The shortened calendar also heightened stress, as many last-minute items had to be bundled into increasingly large conference committee reports amongst hasty and sometimes muddled agreements. These CCRs will now go to Governor Kelly, with no opportunity to override a veto if she chooses to do so. Emotions ran so high that at one point Speaker Pro Tem Blake Carpenter (R-Derby), acting as the presiding officer, threatened to have Rep. Stephanie Saywer-Clayton (D-Overland Park) removed from the chamber after her consistent heckling of a speaking representative, but all is well that ends well, and the members of both chambers signed off with gratitude and love towards their opposition.

Budget

After Governor Laura Kelly vetoed a large number of line items from the legislature's budget this year, with some even supported by Republican leadership, such as Speaker Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita), who urged her to "cut out the fluff." However, the legislature still sought to override a wide range of line-item vetoes. Among the most notable was the legislative branch budget, with criticism centered on the 4.4% pay raise for legislative employees, compared with a 1% increase for other state employees.

This veto override package also included language allowing state employees and legislators to park in most state-owned lots between 5 p.m. and 11 p.m., provided the lots are not secured by a gate or arm. This was a contentious issue, with supporters of the governor's veto claiming the legislature was using their position to secure themselves special benefits, while Rep. Blake Carpenter (R-Derby), the Speaker Pro Tempore, accused the governor of hypocrisy, pointing out that she signed the bill creating the compensation commission that approved the raises, including a raise of more than \$60k for the governor last biennium.

In the education realm, the legislature overrode a veto on provisions that would penalize school districts for student walkouts if they fail to obtain parental permission or properly mark absences, with fines tied to the superintendent's base salary for each violation day. They also reinstated funding and policy language for the pregnancy compassion awareness program and maintained restrictions on the use of state funds for abortion services. Additional overrides in this space included allowing certain Kansas State Department of Education funds to be directed toward programs like Spark Wheel and JAG-K, as well as requiring performance metrics for grants awarded to NGOs.

Vetoes on broader fiscal measures were overridden, such as a 1.5% across the board spending cut, and policies to lapse state employee positions vacant for more than six months were also successfully overridden, as was funding authority to acquire the Fort Dodge Junior Officers Quarters. Lawmakers also restored provisions requiring Medicaid recipients to receive information when entering nursing homes, along with funding for Radical Life, Inc.

However, several items failed to clear both chambers, including the proposed \$50 million Pooled Money Investment Board loan for an aviation company, which was overwhelmingly rejected in the House. Several line-item vetoes passed the House but didn't pass the Senate, such as restricting changes to state assessment cut scores, the Kansas Innovative Assessment pilot program, the nurses fair treatment and recovery fund, and the creation of a fiscal auditor position. Lastly, late on Friday, the legislature unanimously passed the annual reconciliation bill in both chambers.

Tax

Tax legislation saw major action over the last two days of the 2026 session and provided for much of the controversial legislation on the floor of both chambers.

The taxation conference committee continued to meet last week, with one crucial change. On Thursday, Speaker of the House Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) and President of the Senate Ty Masterson (R-Andover) were appointed to replace their respective taxation chairs, Senate Assessment and Taxation Chairwoman Caryn Tyson (R-Parker) and House Taxation Chairman Representative Adam Smith (R-Weskan). Their vice chairs were also replaced by the majority leaders of each chamber: Representative Chris Croft (R-Overland Park) replacing Representative Carl Turner (R-Leawood) for the House, and Senator Chase Blasi (R-Garden Plain) replacing Vice Chair Senator Virgil Peck (R-Havana) for the Senate. This sent the immediate message that leadership was done delaying tax legislation.

In contrast to the numerous delays and power plays during conference committee week, the new Taxation conference committee met early and efficiently. On Thursday, April 9th, the committee set out a plan for the remaining tax bills in committee, and agreed to the following:

HB2044 would now contain the SAFESR homestead continuing eligibility threshold and the active members of the armed services subtraction modification on income tax.

HB2043 became the new property tax relief plan, with the structure of HB2745, the property tax relief plan allowing for a protest petition that passed out of both chambers on March 27th, then vetoed by Governor Laura Kelly. The new bill would allow exceptions for debt service payments, new construction, jurisdictional territory, and would exclude school districts altogether. When the incentives expire, it would allow for a cap on new incentives, and the protest petition, which has gone up and down subject to the will of both chambers, would be altered to 10% of voters from the last secretary of state's election, a narrower qualification than 10% of all eligible voters. It would also allow CPI up to 3%.

SB82 would now include the employer child care tax credit (altered to be nonrefundable, but allowing carry forward up to 3 years), income tax credits for retail sales of higher-ethanol blends of fuel and certain expenditures on purchases of lockable gun and ammunition storage, and would discontinue or repeal certain tax credits. The committee also agreed to a 2 year extension on Rural Opportunity Zones, or ROZ, an agreement that would later cause contention in the house.

The President and Speaker also agreed, conferring amongst their committee members, to simplify language in SCR1603, the property tax assessed valuation cap pushed by Senator Caryn Tyson (R-Parker).

HB2044, the SAFESR homestead changes and subtraction modification for active members of the armed services, passed both chambers with flying colors, 40-0 in the Senate, and 116-4 in the House. The path for the other two tax bills, however, wouldn't be so simple. SB82, the tax credit bill bundle, ran into conflict in the House, sparking a broader debate over tax credits and property tax relief. Representative Kristey Williams (R-Augusta), for instance, argued it catered to big companies and private interests instead of providing property tax relief. The bill attracted criticism, particularly for the ROZ program, which, according to Representative Sean Tarwater (R- Kansas City), "sucks." Representative John Carmichael (D- Wichita) asked "why, why is it still around?"

After debate, the bill was sent back to committee by a motion from Representative David Buehler (R- Lansing), in a vote of 84-36.

When the tax conference committee met again, they agreed to take ROZ out of SB82, which made the bill more acceptable to both chambers, and ultimately led to it passing out of the House 76-45 and the Senate 36-2 later in the evening. In this final Taxation Conference Committee meeting, the committee also agreed on a proposal for HB2535, which would amend the law related to countywide retailers' sales tax authority and apportionment, specifically allowing Butler, Labette, and Leavenworth counties to submit a question of additional sales tax to their voters. The bill includes the contents of SB33, which would apportion countywide retailers' sales tax based on total assessed valuations of the county and cities within the county rather than property taxes levied.

Before HB2535 was presented in either chamber, however, SCR1616, the proposed constitutional amendment which would cap assessed values of real property at 3% was brought to the House floor in a motion by Representative Ken Corbet (R- Shawnee) in Emergency Final Action subject to amendment and debate. Reminiscent of earlier property tax relief proposals, debate on SCR1616 began at almost exactly the same time as HB2043, the property tax relief plan allowing for a protest petition to be brought against proposed increases in property taxes, was brought to the floor of the Senate by Senate President Ty Masterson (R- Andover).

Unlike prior debates on assessment valuation caps debated this year, which Representative Adam Smith (R- Weskan) often carried in a compromise between the Senate and the House, Smith came out against SCR1616 on Friday night. "I'm not sure we have to vote on, yet again, their proposition, when they haven't voted on ours once," he lamented. "I'm tired of getting this shoved down our throats." In reference to the house's proposition, Smith was referring to HCR5011, a constitutional amendment from last year that would put a limit on property tax valuation increases to 4% a year. SCR1616 failed the vote to be brought to the floor as a motion for final action, 68-53.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, HB2043 was subject to many of the same conversations around HB2745. Questions concerned the protest petition and how it would work; it was also, again, accused by Senator Ethan Corson (D-Fairway) of creating a tyranny of the minority. Senator Caryn Tyson (R- Parker) stood up to speak in favor of the bill, but not without castigating the House for failing to pass the Senate's cap on assessed valuation. Nevertheless, she sided with President Masterson, stating, "Is it perfect? Absolutely not. Is it good enough for now? Yes."

HB2043 passed the Senate in a vote of 26-13. The proposal would go on to pass the House 88-34.

With one bill on property tax relief passed, the Senate was not yet ready to let go of property tax relief through an assessed valuation cap. One last attempt was made by Senate President Ty Masterson (R-Andover), who took HCR5008, a proposed constitutional amendment from last year to change rules and regulations, and gutted it as a shell for a rolling-average limitation on property taxes. The proposal was brought to the Senate after midnight on the very last day of session.

The vote ended theatrically, with a preliminary vote count of 26-12 (one short of the necessary 27 votes for a 2/3 majority), prompting a call of the Senate, which would force all members to come to the chamber and vote, regardless of their location. The one missing member, Senator Mike Argabright (R- Lyon), had already left, en route to his home in Lyon, and were he to be forcibly returned to the senate, could have significantly delayed proceedings. This was avoided due to a change in vote by Senator William Clifford (R-Garden City), from nay to aye, putting the final count at 27-12 and allowing the measure to pass to the House.

The House, however, has made its distaste for the Senate's valuation caps exceedingly clear, a sentiment again echoed when [HCR5008](#) made it to the House floor. Carried by Representative Adam Smith (R-Weskan), the motion was both the rolling average Smith berated the Senate earlier in the evening for not passing, and the valuation cap so proposed by the Senate. The debate was likely limited by the late hour, and, once again, the proposal for a valuation cap was voted down, 59-62, failing to reach the constitutional 2/3 majority.

Finally, the very last bill before the House was [HB2535](#), which would provide for countywide retailers' sales tax authorities and the sales tax apportionment formula. As Representative Adam Smith (R-Weskan) pointed out as he carried the bill, of the six counties who asked for proposed countywide retailers' sales tax authority, three were approved, Butler, Labette, and Leavenworth. The apportionment formula, freeze, and extension provisions of the bill were kept as well, and though Representative Smith said the three counties without taxing authority were likely "a common oversight" that was unintentional, the decision was seen by some as punitive. Representative Troy Waymaster (R- Bunker Hill), whose county, Ellsworth, was denied permission for a countywide retailers' sales tax, made a substitute motion to not adopt the conference committee report for [HB2535](#). Representative Waymaster argued his county was denied "because of political theater," and that the decision was "vindictive" and "unjust." Perhaps because it was half past 1:00 AM in the morning or perhaps because of the uncharacteristic rage from Representative Waymaster, the motion to not concur succeeded 107-14, and [HB2535](#) was killed.

Minutes afterward, the House was adjourned, sine die, for the 2026 session.

Conference Committee Reports

[SCR1603](#) - would amend the Kansas Constitution, beginning in tax year 2028, to authorize the Legislature to provide for valuation limitations for any classes or subclasses of property. Requiring a 2/3rds majority, failed in the House on a vote of 69-54.

[SB51](#) - Authorizing the chief information security officer to receive audit reports, updating statutes related to services provided by the chief information technology officer and authorizing the office of information technology services to provide certain services to political subdivisions and hospitals. The Senate concurred in conference by a vote of 38-1.

[SB33](#) - would amend law related to countywide retailers' sales tax authority and apportionment and repeal obsolete statutory references to federal law. Passed the House 122-1, not acted on by the Senate.

HB2164 - would establish minimum requirements for recess in public schools and include such time in school term calculations beginning in the 2027–2028 school year, direct the State Board of Education (State Board) to establish a Kansas State Physical Fitness Test, and amend the Kansas Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to ban certain food additives from reimbursable school meals. Passed the Senate 24-13, failed in the House 40-83.

HB2412 - would require the State Board of Education (State Board) to develop curriculum, and school districts to provide instruction, on the negative impacts of communist, fascist, and socialist regimes and ideologies for students in non-elementary grades. The bill also would require students entering grade nine at an accredited public, private, or parochial high school to pass an American civics examination (exam) as a condition for graduation. Passed the Senate 23-14 and the House 80-43.

HB2535 - would amend law related to countywide retailers' sales tax authority and apportionment and would authorize the counties of Butler, Labette, and Leavenworth to submit questions of additional countywide sales taxes to the voters of the respective counties. Passed the Senate 30-8, motion to not pass the report passed the House 107-14.

HCR5008 - would amend the Kansas Constitution, beginning in tax year 2028, to authorize the Legislature to provide for valuation limitations for any classes or subclasses of property. Passed the Senate 27-12, failed in the House 59-62.

HB2763 - would establish minimum requirements for recess in public schools and include such time in school term calculations beginning in the 2027–2028 school year and direct the State Board of Education (State Board) to establish a Kansas State Physical Fitness Test. Passed the Senate 29-10 and the House 74-47.

SB82 - would make changes to tax credits for employer expenses for child care, create income tax credits for retail sales of higher-ethanol blends of fuel and certain expenditures on purchases of lockable gun and ammunition storage, and discontinue or repeal certain tax credits. Passed the House 76-45 and the Senate 36-2.

SB430 - would include mitragynine, the primary psychoactive component of kratom, on Schedule I of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Passed the House 88-34 and the Senate 38-0.

HB2043 - would create a protest petition process for the adoption of local government budgets in excess of a funding limit established by the bill and revise the revenue neutral rate notice to incorporate changes associated with the protest petition process. Passed the Senate 27-13 and the House 87-35.

SB300 - would create requirements for certain manufacturers of alcoholic liquor regarding corporation income tax and repeal obsolete statutory language. Passed the Senate 121-0 and the House 39-0.

HB2111 - would prohibit a city or county from enforcing any building code, ordinance, or resolution regulating the use of a non-public registered agritourism location. The bill would be a part of and supplemental to the Agritourism Promotion Act and make technical amendments. Passed the Senate 27-13 and the House 71-49.

HB2515 - would establish the Kansas Legal Tender Act and provide an income tax subtraction modification for gains from the sale of certain forms of gold and silver. Passed the Senate 29-11 and the House 76-44.

HB2044 - would enact a subtraction modification for certain compensation received by active-duty members of the armed forces and would specify that taxpayers would not lose eligibility for certain residential property tax relief programs due to their residential values increasing above the eligibility threshold when they have previously received refunds pursuant to the programs. Passed the Senate 40-0 and the House 116-4.

Veto Overrides

HB2603 - Prohibiting regulation of battery-charged security fences by municipalities. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 30-9 in the Senate.

HB2719 - Providing an exception to the rules and regulations filing act for technical amendments, creating a process for certain rules and regulations to receive priority status in the adoption process, removing references to revival of rules and regulations, clarifying that the department of the budget is not required to approve proposed rules and regulations mandated by the federal government, adding references to department of corrections rules and regulations that are not subject to the act and requiring an agency submit a proposed rule and regulation to the joint committee on administrative rules and regulations prior to presentation of a bill to the legislature for ratification. Motion to override veto prevailed 89-34 in the House and 38-1 in the Senate.

HB2727 - Providing for the plaintiff to elect to limit recovery in claims brought for violations of the woman's-right-to-know act and making the laws providing for medical malpractice screening inapplicable when such election is made. Motion to override veto prevailed 87-36 in the House and 31-8 in the Senate.

HB2729 - Requiring the Kansas department of health and environment to provide forms and notices to physicians pursuant to the woman's-right-to-know act. Motion to override veto prevailed 87-36 in the House and 31-8 in the Senate.

HB2329 - Changing the name of juvenile crisis intervention centers to juvenile stabilization centers, modifying the intake criteria for such centers, prohibiting certain rules and regulations for such centers, modifying the treatment and services provided by such centers, 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, authorizing the secretary to make expenditures from the evidence-based programs account of the state general fund moneys to contract for such beds and transferring moneys from such account of the state general fund to the department for children and families to provide juvenile stabilization services. Motion to override veto prevailed 89-34 in the House and 29-10 in the Senate.

HB2004 - would establish and amend law regarding the sharing of information related to federal assistance programs with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 29-10 in the Senate.

HB2333 - would establish the Kansas Intellectual Rights and Knowledge (KIRK) Act (Act). The bill would set restrictions on and requirements of public, postsecondary educational institutions regarding individuals participating in non-commercial expressive activities and would establish a cause of action to be brought by either the Attorney General or the individual harmed should a college or university violate the Act. The bill would also amend the Kansas Preservation of Religious Freedom Act. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 29-11 in the Senate.

HB2732 - would create the crime of unlawful approach of a first responder and create law related to immigration enforcement to allow sheriffs to detain persons subject to a facially sufficient immigration detainer request, require certain municipal insurance pools cover federally approved immigration detainer operations conducted by a law enforcement agency, require the State to pay for certain federal civil judgment costs, require the Attorney General to represent law enforcement in certain civil lawsuits, and provide civil immunity to officers or agencies acting in good faith under a 287(g) agreement or detainer. The bill would amend the Interlocal Cooperation Act to specify that a sheriff does not need approval of a county commission to enter into a federal 287(g) agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The bill would also incorporate federal law enforcement officers, their vehicles, and enforcement of federal law into certain traffic, criminal, and tort laws. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 31-9 in the Senate.

HB2437 - would enact the SAVE Kansas Act, concerning voter registration record maintenance, and would create restrictions for online voter registration websites. Motion to override veto prevailed 84-39 in the House and 28-11 in the Senate.

HB2521 - Expanding the Kansas tort claims act to include child placement agencies that contract with the secretary for children and families. Motion to override veto prevailed 87-36 in the House and 30-9 in the Senate.

HB2593 - Requiring that a political subdivision hold an open meeting to discuss a contingency fee contract for legal services before approving such contract and requiring the attorney general to approve such contracts. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 27-12 in the Senate.

SB30 - would require adoption of new occupational licenses and material changes to existing licenses by certain state Executive Branch agencies to be approved by the Legislature. The bill would also require such agencies to annually report certain information to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules and Regulations (JCARR). Motion to override veto prevailed 88-35 in the House and 30-9 in the Senate.

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. Motion to override veto prevailed 87-36 in the House and 31-8 in the Senate.

SB361 - would authorize the state of Kansas to participate in the federal tax credit program for contributions of individuals to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 29-10 in the Senate.

SB462 - Prohibiting certain public nuisance claims, providing that only the attorney general may file claims regarding public nuisances that are not wholly contained in one political subdivision unless the attorney general delegates authorization to file such claims and requiring special injury for certain public nuisance actions. Motion to override veto prevailed 86-37 in the House and 30-9 in the Senate.

SB391 - Prohibiting cities and counties from adopting or enforcing any ordinance or resolution that requires landlords to lease housing to tenants receiving financial assistance from or through the housing choice voucher program or any other housing assistance program or that otherwise restricts a landlord's ability to consider the income source of a prospective tenant. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 31-8 in the Senate.

HB2731- would establish data-matching and eligibility verification requirements for the Secretary for Children and Families and the Secretary of Health and Environment for certain public assistance programs; permit continuous eligibility provisions for select individuals; prohibit certain exemptions, waivers, and self-attestation; and change eligibility requirements for certain public assistance programs. Motion to override veto prevailed 84-39 in the House and 29-10 in the Senate.

HB2372 - would create the crime of unlawful approach of a first responder and create law related to immigration enforcement to allow sheriffs to detain persons subject to a facially sufficient immigration detainer request, require certain municipal insurance pools cover federally approved immigration detainer operations conducted by a law enforcement agency, require the State to pay for certain federal civil judgment costs, require the Attorney General to represent law enforcement in certain civil lawsuits, and provide civil immunity to officers or agencies acting in good faith under a 287(g) agreement or detainer. The bill would amend the Interlocal Cooperation Act to specify that a sheriff does not need approval of a county commission to enter into a federal 287(g) agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The bill would also incorporate federal law enforcement officers, their vehicles, and enforcement of federal law into certain traffic, criminal, and tort laws. Motion to override veto prevailed 85-38 in the House and 31-9 in the Senate.

Failed Veto Overrides

HB2626 - would modify veteran's preference in government employment and permissive preference in private sector employment, establish a Kansas military forces killed in action or died from active duty wounds kiosk at the Capitol, establish the Kansas Military Affairs Commission, and limit compensation for certain types of assistance related to veterans benefits matters. Motion to override veto failed 81-42 in the House.

HB2745 - Providing a protest petition to contest certain increases in property tax revenues and continuing reimbursements from the taxpayer notification costs fund for an additional five years. No motion to reconsider.

HB2651 - would require the issuance of a warrant and prohibit the issuance of a summons for a complaint alleging the commission of a felony. The bill would also prohibit the release of the defendant on the defendant's own recognizance for any bond set on a warrant issued for failing to appear in response to a summons. No motion to reconsider.

HB2569 - would amend signature-verification requirements; add provisions that, upon an order or judgment that invalidates or enjoins the enforcement of signature-verification requirements, would amend law authorizing advance voting by mail in the state; and require all actions alleging a state election law, or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto, violates one or more provision of the U.S. Constitution or Kansas Constitution be brought in the District Court of Shawnee County. No motion to reconsider.

HB2587 - would require citizenship status be listed on driver's licenses and permit any person whose driver's license lists such person as a noncitizen to obtain a provisional ballot for voting purposes if such person claims to be a citizen. No motion to reconsider.

HB2468 - would authorize the state of Kansas to participate in the federal tax credit program for contributions of individuals to scholarship granting organizations and would increase the aggregate credit limit on the state's Tax Credit for Low Income Scholarship Students (TCLISS) Program. No motion to reconsider.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS INVESTORS

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