



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 24, 2025

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WEEK 6 – TURNAROUND DAY MARKS KEY DEADLINE FOR LEGISLATURE

Thursday, Feb. 20, marked a critical juncture in the legislative session: Turnaround Day. It was the final opportunity for bills to be debated and passed in the House or Senate before moving to the opposite chamber. Lawmakers raced against the clock, making last-minute pushes to advance their proposals. Any bill not considered or not referred to an exempt committee before the deadline is unlikely to pass in the 2025 session.

The Senate completed its work in two days, while the House required an additional day, finishing on Turnaround Day.

Senate Moves Forward on Key Legislation

The Kansas Senate completed the first half of its 2025 session ahead of schedule, passing legislation that tightens public assistance rules, increases government oversight, and alters state governance procedures. Among its actions, the Senate Committee on Government Efficiency led efforts to reshape public assistance programs, successfully advancing three bills. Modeled after the federal Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the committee spearheaded several reform measures.

One key proposal, Senate Bill 161, passed 30-10. It requires legislative approval before state agencies seek federal waivers that expand public assistance eligibility or increase state costs. Debate over the bill included an unsuccessful attempt to add Medicaid expansion, which was rejected 12-28.

During the first half of the session, the committee also launched the Government Efficiency Portal, allowing the public to submit ideas on how the state government can better serve Kansas residents.

House Tackles Broad Agenda

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Over three days, the Kansas House of Representatives debated bills on public safety, health care, education, and taxation. The House also passed the budget, though that effort will be discussed later in this newsletter.

In a move affecting housing, lawmakers repealed the Kansas Affordable Housing Tax Credit Act (HB 2119), citing its \$25 million annual cost. Supporters warned that ending the program could reduce housing availability, but the measure passed 85-36.

In a rare moment of bipartisan agreement, HB 2160, which strengthens whistleblower protections for municipal employees reporting unlawful or dangerous conduct, passed unanimously.

Second Half of the Session Begins

Now, the work from each chamber moves to the other for review and discussion in the second half of the legislative session. Below is the legislative “box score” at halftime.

Legislation Box Score:

House of Representatives

- Total number of bills introduced: 388
- Bills passed: 112
- Concurrent Resolutions passed: 3
- Bills referred to an exempt committee: 24 “blessed”
- Bills killed: 10

Senate

- Total number of bills introduced: 277
- Bills passed: 78
- Concurrent Resolutions passed: 3
- Bills referred to an exempt committee: 12 “blessed”
- Bills killed: 0

The Kansas Legislative Deadlines can be found here: [legislative_deadlines.pdf](#)

LEGISLATURE OVERRIDES FIRST VETO

The Kansas Legislature overrode Gov. Laura Kelly’s (D-Topeka) veto of the Help Not Harm Act, banning gender-affirming care for minors. The new law prohibits puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and gender transition surgeries.

Gov. Kelly vetoed the bill on Feb. 11, arguing it would harm families, businesses, and the economy. The Republican-controlled legislature secured the override with a 31-9 Senate vote and an 85-34 House vote.

Supporters claim the law protects children from irreversible treatments, while opponents call it government overreach. The law takes effect immediately, requiring doctors to phase out treatments by year’s end. Advocacy groups plan judicial challenges.

HOUSE APPROVES LEGISLATIVELY LED BUDGET

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The Kansas House of Representatives approved HB 2007 on Feb. 19, passing the state's first legislatively led budget with an 83-36 vote. The bill appropriates \$27 billion for fiscal year 2025 and \$25.5 billion for fiscal year 2026, including \$10.6 billion from the State General Fund (SGF). The 2026 budget reduces spending by \$246 million compared to the prior year, primarily by eliminating 1,000 vacant positions and implementing a 1.5% reduction in general operating expenses.

Republican leaders argued that the budget keeps spending within sustainable limits as the state's revenue outlook tightens. Rep. Troy Waymaster (R-Bunker Hill), chair of the House Appropriations Committee, said the goal was to produce a fiscally responsible plan while maintaining funding for critical services.

Key Spending Allocations

The budget includes:

- \$14.3 million for two-year college apprenticeships
- \$10.5 million for technical colleges
- \$7 million for a Kansas Highway Patrol airport hangar
- \$4.5 million for aviation research at Wichita State University
- \$1.9 million for dam repairs by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
- \$179 million for bridge construction and repairs
- \$8.7 million to clear part of the Medicaid intellectual and developmental disability services waitlist

Lawmakers restored \$1 million to the Kansas Department of Commerce after receiving requested details on economic development incentives.

Debate and Amendments

Democrats and Gov. Kelly criticized the plan for underfunding special education. The governor proposed \$72.6 million for special education for fiscal year 2026. By contrast, the budget increases special education funding by \$10 million. An effort by Rep. Jarrod Ousley (D-Merriam) to reallocate sports fund revenue for special education failed.

Lawmakers proposed six amendments, all of which failed except for two Republican-led revisions. Among the rejected amendments:

- House Democrats sought \$30 million more for special education; the committee instead settled for \$10 million.
- Medicaid expansion failed, keeping Kansas among the 10 states that have not expanded the program.
- Rep. Jo Ella Hoye (D-Lenexa) introduced an amendment to eliminate school meal copays for lower-income students, which failed 40-77.

House Republicans argued that spending constraints were necessary as the state faces projected revenue shortfalls. The budget does not include funding for free school meals, despite efforts by Democrats to include it.

Next Steps

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If approved by the Kansas Senate, this would mark the first time in five years that the Republican-controlled Legislature has reduced overall spending. The bill now moves to the Senate, where further modifications may be made before reaching Gov. Kelly's desk.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITY FEBRUARY 24-28

Full legislature returns on Tuesday, Feb. 25, for a shortened week following Turnaround

Monday, February 24

- Education Funding House and Senate Task Force
 - Overview of legal/max; Kansas School Equity and Enhancement Act weightings; At-risk and high-density at-risk weightings; bilingual weighting; career and technical education weighting; transportation weighting; low- and high-enrollment weighting; ancillary and cost of living weighting.

Tuesday, February 25

- House Federal and State Affairs
 - Final Action on HB 2028: Requiring the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to offer discounted resident senior combination hunting and fishing passes to residents of this state who are 65 years of age or older and removing the expiration date for Kansas kids' lifetime combination hunting and fishing licenses.
 - Final Action on HB 2372: Designating the existing Fallen Firefighters Memorial within the Kansas Firefighters Museum in Wichita as the official Fallen Firefighters Memorial of Kansas and replacing the Kansas Firefighters Memorial Advisory Committee with the Kansas Firefighter Memorial Council.
- House Water Committee
 - Presentation on: Kansas reservoir water supply, Connie Owen and Richard Rockel, Kansas Water Office, John Shelley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- House Transportation
 - Informational briefing: Unmanned aerial systems: Kansas agriculture, Kelly Hills Unmanned Systems: Lukas Koch.
- House Agriculture Committee
 - Presentation on: Impact of grasslands in Kansas.
- House Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2377: Providing that countywide retailers' sales tax is apportioned based on total assessed valuations of property taxes rather than property taxes levied.
- House Elections Committee
 - Hearing on SB 5: Prohibiting the use of funds provided by the United States government for the conduct of elections and election-related activities unless approved by the legislature.
- Senate Transportation Committee
 - Presentation on: Kansas Highway Patrol.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
 - Confirmation hearing on: Thomas Browne, Board of Tax Appeals, and Kristen Wheeler, Board of Tax Appeals.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2043: Requiring agents and insurers to respond to inquiries from the commissioner of insurance within 14 calendar days and authorizing certain rebate pilot programs to exceed one year in

duration.

- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on SCR 1611: Proposing a constitutional amendment to provide for direct election of Kansas Supreme Court justices and abolish the Supreme Court Nominating Commission.
- Senate Ways and Means Committee
 - Briefing by staff on Sub HB 2007: Making and concerning supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2025 and appropriations for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for various state agencies.

Wednesday, February 26

- House Appropriations Committee
 - Presentation on Kansas universities: Emporia State University, Mr. Ken Hush, president; Fort Hays State University, Dr. Tisa Mason, president; Kansas State University, Dr. Richard Linton, president; Pittsburg State University, Dr. Dan Shipp, president; University of Kansas and University of Kansas Cancer Center, Dr. Douglas Girod, chancellor; Washburn University, Dr. JuliAnn Mazachek, president and chief executive officer; Wichita State University, Dr. Richard Muma, president.
- House Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on HCR 5001: Making application to the Congress to call a convention of the states to establish term limits for members of Congress.
 - Final action on HB 2378: Establishing the Removal of Squatters Act, providing a procedure to remove a squatter from a dwelling unit, requiring owners or agents of dwelling units to provide an affidavit to the county sheriff, requiring notice to vacate by the sheriff, establishing the crime of providing a false affidavit and establishing a civil cause of action for wrongful removal of a person from a dwelling unit, allowing attorney fees and punitive damages.
- Financial Institutions and Pensions
 - Informational hearing on HB 212: Pooled money-continuation.
- House Transportation Committee
 - Informational briefing: KDOT road usage charge pilot, Joel Skelley.
- House Child Welfare Committee
 - Presentation on: History and impact of 2016 SB 367 and other juvenile justice reforms on the child welfare system.
- House Judiciary Committee
 - Informational briefing: Squatting in Kansas.
- House Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2336: Providing for the apportionment of business income by the single sales factor and the apportionment of financial institution income by the receipts factor, deductions from income when using the single sales factor and receipts factor, the decrease in corporate income tax rates determining when sales other than tangible personal property are made in the state and excluding sales of a unitary business group of electric and natural gas public utilities.
 - Hearing on HB 2211: Providing funding for STAR bond districts to replace lost food sales tax revenue.
- Senate Agriculture Committee
 - Hearing continuation on SB 211: Authorizing the members of the Wildlife and Parks Commission to submit proposed rules and regulations to such commission.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

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- Hearing on SB 269: Prohibiting a Board of Tax Appeals filing fee when a previous appeal remains pending before the board.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2042: Requiring title agents to make their audit reports available for inspection instead of submitting such reports annually, requiring the amount of surety bonds filed with the commissioner of insurance to be \$100,000, eliminating the controlled business exemption in certain counties.
- Senate Local Government, Transparency and Ethics Committee
 - Hearing on SB 66: Requiring certain local governmental officials to disclose substantial interests in the construction and operation of major development projects and to abstain from voting on governmental actions relating to such matters.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2106: Banning contributions from foreign nationals for the support or defeat of a proposed amendment to the Kansas constitution.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2061: Including above-ground and below-ground 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.
- Senate Ways and Means Committee
 - Budget hearing on higher education institutions.
- Senate Education Committee and House Higher Education Budget Committee Joint Meeting
 - Presentation on: ReUp Education.
- Senate Utilities Committee
 - Presentation on: Informative briefing on abandoned wells.
 - Presentation on: Update on the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board.

Thursday, February 27

- House Appropriations Committee
 - Informational hearing: 2026 World Cup.
- House Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Final action on HCR 5001: Making application to the Congress of the United States to call a convention of the states to establish term limits for members of Congress.
- House Water Committee
 - Presentation on: Water fluoridation, Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
- House Transportation Committee
 - Hearing on SB 8: Requiring drivers to proceed with due caution when passing stationary vehicles displaying hazard warning lights.
- House Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on SB 35: Discontinuing the state property tax levies for the Kansas Educational Building Fund and the State Institutions Building Fund and providing for financing therefore from the state general fund.
 - Hearing on HB 2276: Providing an income tax credit for an eligible small business that purchases qualified local news organization advertising.
- Senate Agriculture Committee

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- Possible final action on SB 213: Prohibiting nonresidents from hunting migratory waterfowl during certain times and places and lowering fees for migratory waterfowl habitat stamps.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on SB 108: Authorizing counties to impose an earnings tax.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Potential hearing on HB 2046: Authorizing insurers to file certain travel insurance policies under the accident and health line of insurance.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on SB 254: Prohibiting aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States from receiving any state or local public benefit in accordance with applicable federal law.
- Senate Ways and Means Committee
 - Budget hearing and recommendations on higher education institutions.
- Senate Education Committee
 - Hearing on SB 263: Establishing standards and requirements for active shooter drills conducted by public and accredited nonpublic elementary and secondary schools.
 - Presentation on: Amira Learning.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

SENATE BILLS

Campaign Finance & Elections

SB 272: US Constitution/Conventions. This bill, requested for introduction by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker) and sponsored by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee), would provide for the appointment and qualification of delegates allocated to represent Kansas whenever a convention is called pursuant to Article V of the US. Constitution; would prescribe the duties and responsibilities thereof; would authorize instruction for delegates by the legislature; and would create a Joint Committee of Correspondence. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

SB 273: Elections/Election Dates. This bill, requested by the Sedgwick County government and sponsored by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee), would require that any special election be held on the first Tuesday in March. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

Public Utilities

SB 274: Corporation Commission/Nuclear Generation Feasibility Study. This bill, requested by Sen. Joseph Claeys (R-Maize) and sponsored by the Committee on Utilities chaired by Sen. Michael Fagg (R-El Dorado), would require the Kansas Corporation Commission to engage a consulting firm to conduct a technical and legal feasibility study on new nuclear energy generation in this state; making and concerning appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, for the state corporation commission. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Utilities.

Taxation

SB 277: Income Tax/Adjust Gross Income. This bill, sponsored by the Committee on Assessment and Taxation chaired by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), would exempt certain qualified tips from state income tax by providing a subtraction modification for such tips. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Assessment and Taxation.

Senate Resolutions

SR 1709: Jerry Moran. This resolution, sponsored by Sen. Dinah Sykes (D-Lenexa), would commend U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kansas) for his unwavering support for Kansas farmers. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee).

HOUSE BILLS

Taxation

HB 2385: Income Tax. This bill, sponsored by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan), would authorize cities and counties to propose an earnings tax for ballot question and to levy such tax upon nonresidents of the city or county if approved by the electors of a city or county; would require resubmission of the question, if approved, to the electors every 10 years thereafter; would allow certain credits and exemptions against such tax; would provide for the deduction by public and private employers of such tax from employee earnings; and would provide for revenue to be pledged for certain purposes. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Taxation.

BILL TRACKING HISTORY

A history of the bills we are tracking as of Feb. 24, 2025, can be found [here](#).

Kansas Legislative Insights is a publication developed by the government affairs & public policy law practice group of Foulston Siefkin LLP. It is designed to inform business executives, human resources and government relations professionals, and general counsel about current developments occurring in current Kansas legislation. Published regularly during the Kansas legislative session and periodically when the legislature is not in session, it focuses on issues involving healthcare, insurance, public finance, taxation, financial institutions, business & economic development, energy, real estate & construction, environmental, agribusiness, and employment. Bill summaries are by necessity brief, however, for additional information on any issue before the Kansas Legislature, contact Foulston Siefkin's government affairs & public policy law practice group leader, C. Edward Watson, II, at 316.291.9589 or cawatson@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

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