

NEWSLETTERS



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 3, 2021

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REDISTRICTING PROCESS BEGINS

The process of redrawing the maps for Kansas congressional, legislative, and state Board of Education seats, called redistricting, is about to begin. Next week, the House and Senate redistricting committees will conduct a joint listening tour in 14 cities across Kansas using the same locations as a decade ago. Listening meetings will be conducted the week of August 9-13, starting in Colby. Senate Democrats and the League of Women Voters have expressed concern about the compressed timeline for the listening tour with the absence of the final U.S. Census data. In 2011, the redistricting listening tours were spaced over four months, and only a few stops were held without the final data. Due to the pandemic and other challenges, the final U.S. Census data is not expected to be available to states until later this month. Typically, this information has been available by early summer. Even without final census numbers, most observers believe the State's population is continuing its gradual shift from rural to urban districts.

Legislators key to the reapportionment process for each chamber are dominated by leadership. The Senate Redistricting Committee is chaired by Senate Vice President Rick Wilborn, R-McPherson, with Senate President Ty Masterson, R-Andover, serving as the Vice Chair and Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, D-Overland Park, serving as the ranking Democrat. The nine-member Senate Committee is composed of seven Republicans and two Democrats. The membership has senators from Johnson County, southeast Kansas, Topeka, western Kansas, and Wichita.

The House features standing committee leaders on its redistricting committee. The 17-member House Redistricting Committee is chaired by Rep. Chris Croft, R-Overland Park, and the Vice Chair is Bradley Ralph, R-Dodge City. Former House Minority Leader Tom Burroughs, D- Kansas City, is the ranking Democrat. The House committee is dominated by experienced and upcoming committee leaders. Of the 12 Republican members, all are either chairs or vice-chairs of standing House Committees. This approach allows House members to provide input directly to the leaders of key committees who serve with them every day during the legislative session.

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Traditionally, the House and Senate pass the other's redistricting map after the lines are redrawn and compromises worked within each chamber. Congressional district maps often generate more controversy than state-level district changes. Legislators not seeking re-election in 2022 provide some flexibility in redrawing the maps. Republican legislators want to avoid a repeat of 2011, where the federal courts unilaterally redrew district boundaries so intraparty disputes must be minimized. Republicans are also interested in creating a map allowing all four Kansas Congressional seats to be represented by Republicans. Currently, U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids, D-Shawnee, represents the third district covering the metro Kansas City area. In 2020, she won re-election by nearly 40,000 votes.

KANSAS REVENUE UPDATE

The Kansas economy continues to show signs of recovery over the last three months. June 30 marked the end of the Kansas 2021 fiscal year. Last fiscal year saw \$8.9 billion in total tax collections, which is more than 9% above the estimate. For June, the revenue collected was \$157.4 million, or 22.6%, more than the monthly estimate. In June, individual income tax was up 15% over the estimate; corporate income tax was up more than 136% over the estimate; and sales tax up 12% over the estimate.

July tax revenue was more than \$60 million, or 11%, above the consensus revenue estimate for the first month of the new 2022 fiscal year. Retail sales tax collections were up \$11.6 million, or 5.2%. Compensating use tax collections (sales on products bought out-of-state) were \$4.3 million, or 7.8%, above the estimate. The Department of Revenue economists will be carefully watching to see if the Delta variant has an impact on the state's economic recovery.

INTERIM COMMITTEES

In addition to the redistricting listening tour, late summer and fall will be busy. Last month, the Legislative Coordinating Council approved more than 100 days of interim committee meetings. In non-election years, interim committee activity is even higher. The modernization of Kansas liquor laws, budget issues, criminal justice reform, information technology, and state building construction are among the areas of study.

HOUSE MEMBER DIES

On July 20, Rep. Ron Howard, R-Wichita, died in Wichita at age 67. He was elected to two terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. He missed much of the 2021 session due to illness. He was a former Boeing employee who was elected to the House in 2018. Gov. Laura Kelly ordered state flags to be flown at half-staff until his interment. Foulston sends our deepest condolences to Rep. Howard's family.

Kansas Legislative Insights is a publication developed by the Governmental Relations & Public Policy Law practice group of Foulston Siefkin LLP. It is designed to inform business executives, human resources and governmental relations professionals, and general counsel about current developments occurring in current Kansas legislation. Published regularly during the Kansas legislative session, it focuses on issues involving healthcare, insurance, public finance, taxation, financial institutions, business & economic development, energy, real estate & construction, environmental, agribusiness, employment, and workers compensation. Bill summaries are by necessity brief, however, for additional information on any issue before the Kansas Legislature, contact Foulston Siefkin's Governmental Relations & Public Policy Law practice group leader, James P. Rankin at 785.233.3600 or jrankin@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

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As a partner at Foulston Siefkin, Eddie represents clients in matters before state regulatory commissions, courts, and local governmental bodies. He has built and maintained relationships with key individuals – including lobbyists, elected and appointed officials, and staff members – that prove valuable in advancing clients' interests and issues. Drawing on his experience as a regional governmental affairs attorney for AT&T in Chicago, he helps clients navigate the maze of federal policies and agencies, advises on how processes work in Washington, and provides introductions to those who can help them accomplish their goals.

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PRACTICE AREAS

- Government Affairs & Public Policy Law