



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 23, 2026

MIDPOINT IN TOPEKA: WHAT SURVIVED — AND WHAT IT SIGNALS

The Kansas Legislature has reached its midpoint. Turnaround week separated the measures that will advance into the second half of the session from those that will not. While debates ranged from education policy to public benefits and regulatory reform, the week clarified priorities — particularly around institutional authority, regulatory oversight, and the boundaries of executive power.

Below is a focused recap of floor action, followed by the legislative box score at the break and a preview of what comes next.

TURNAROUND 2026: DEFINING BOUNDARIES

Turnaround week in Topeka is usually about survival — which bills make it past the midpoint. This year, it was also about defining boundaries.

The most visible moment came with the Kansas Legislature's override of the governor's veto of Senate Bill 244. The Senate voted 31–9 to override, and the House followed with an 87–37 vote, exceeding the required two-thirds threshold. The margins reflected firm majority support and unified minority opposition.

Beyond that flashpoint, structural changes dominated.

In elections, the House voted 72–50 to repeal the state's Mail Ballot Election Act. Other measures advanced to centralize venue authority for constitutional election lawsuits and strengthen voter roll verification processes.

On civil liability, the Senate advanced reforms to courtroom practice. At the same time, lawmakers moved in a bipartisan direction on pharmacy benefit managers. A 32–8 Senate vote expanded state oversight of pharmacy benefit managers and addressed pricing transparency.

Legislation regarding energy regulation also moved forward, with broad support for updating the gas system reliability surcharge framework.

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Meanwhile, the House approved an extension of the governor's World Cup emergency declaration, but the Senate adjourned without acting — a reminder that executive authority remains sensitive terrain.

After two days of floor action, the Senate adjourned midweek. Turnaround concluded Thursday evening with House adjournment. Both chambers will return next week to begin work on bills that survived the deadline and to start the second half of the session.

Turnaround 2026 showed a legislature focused less on expansion and more on control — over elections, litigation, regulation, and executive power — with selective bipartisan alignment where market oversight was concerned.

TURNAROUND AT A GLANCE

The Kansas Legislature has reached the traditional turnaround break, the point at which most bills must pass their chamber of origin to stay alive. Measures that do not advance generally fall away unless referred to an exempt committee, a procedural step often called being “blessed.”

Below is the legislative box score at the break.

House of Representatives

- Total number of bills introduced: 377
- Bills passed: 151
- Concurrent resolutions passed: 7
- Bills referred to an exempt committee: 0 blessed
- Bills stricken from the debate calendar: 24
- Bills remaining in all House committees: 541

Senate

- Total number of bills introduced: 216
- Bills passed: 62
- Concurrent resolutions passed: 6
- Bills referred to an exempt committee: 23 blessed
- Bills stricken from the debate calendar: 0
- Bills remaining in Senate committees: 380

COMING SOON: "IN THEIR OWN WORDS"

In the weeks ahead, Kansas Legislative Insights will introduce a new recurring feature: "In Their Own Words." Each edition will present three focused questions to a member of the Kansas Legislature. Responses will be limited in length, lightly edited for clarity and grammar, and published only after review and approval. No commentary will be added.

Our goal is simple: informed perspective, presented clearly and fairly — in their own words.

UPCOMING WEEK: FEBRUARY 23–27, 2026

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Tuesday, Feb. 24

- Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
 - Presentation on: Burrton chloride plume in the Equus Beds.
- Senate Transportation Committee
 - Briefing on: Kansas Turnpike Authority.
- House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee
 - Hearing on SB 348: Exempting any electric public utility that is a not-for-profit, wholly owned subsidiary of an electric cooperative public utility from the jurisdiction of the State Corporation Commission.
- House Water Committee
 - Presentation on: Irrigation systems.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2318: Providing that future income and privilege tax rate decreases be contingent on exceeding tax receipt revenues.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Informational briefing on: Medicare Advantage.
- House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee
 - Informational briefing: Water Injection Dredging Update by Connie Owen, director, Kansas Water Office, and Richard Rockel, public water supply program manager, Kansas Water Office.
- House Commerce, Local Government and Economic Development Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2768: Requiring landlords, under rental agreements governed by the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, to accept multiple payment amounts if rent is paid on time and in full and to consider certain income when evaluating a tenant's qualifications for housing.
 - Commerce Conversations: Steve Feilmeier, former CFO of Koch, addressing affordable housing challenges.
- House Transportation Committee
 - Presentation on: Update from the Kansas Turnpike Authority.
- House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
 - Presentation by: State FFA officers.
 - Presentation on: Subsurface Drip Irrigation (SDI).
- House Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2619: Providing a sales tax exemption for sales of manufactured, mobile, and modular homes and for materials and services used by a contractor when constructing or remodeling affordable housing for certain organizations.
 - Hearing on HB 2621: Providing a property tax exemption for real property owned by a not-for-profit organization and used to provide affordable housing.
 - Final action on HB 2644: Requiring a county appraiser to adjust the value of residential and commercial property upon final determination or obtain a fee simple appraisal if the appraised value reflects an increase of more than 5% over three years.

Wednesday, Feb. 25

- Senate Transportation Committee
 - Hearing on SB 318: Requiring vehicle turn signals to be used when moving right or left or exiting a roundabout.

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- House Appropriations Committee
 - Informational hearing: Department of Commerce, STAR Bonds.
- House Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on SB 299: Requiring the Supreme Court Nominating Commission to release certain records under the Kansas Open Records Act.
- House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee
 - Guest speaker: Doug Wareham, president and CEO, Kansas Bankers Association.
 - Presentation on: Robbins Banking Institute, Fort Hays State University, by Dr. Emily Breit, professor.
 - Presentation on: Kansas Small Business Development Center, Fort Hays State University, by Dan Lara, state director.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2336: Providing for the apportionment of business income using the single sales factor; apportionment of financial institution income using the receipts factor; related deductions; reductions in corporate income tax rates; determining when certain sales are made in the state; and excluding sales of a unitary business group of electric and natural gas public utilities.
 - Hearing on HB 2377: Providing that countywide retailers' sales tax apportionment based on tangible property tax levies remain unchanged until Dec. 31, 2026.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2540: Exempting contingent deferred annuities from certain requirements of the standard nonforfeiture law for individual deferred annuities and authorizing the commissioner of insurance to establish nonforfeiture benefits through rules and regulations.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on SB 395: Requiring treasurers of candidates and persons supporting or opposing constitutional amendments to report lists of small donors' names and addresses to the Governmental Ethics Commission and providing that such lists shall not be part of any report required to be made public.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2413: Providing that theft of livestock or implements of husbandry is a severity level 5, nonperson felony.
 - Hearing on HB 2422: Providing that theft of grain is a severity level 6, nonperson felony.
- Senate Commerce Committee
 - Hearing on SB 393: Authorizing the sale of alcoholic beverages 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the duration of the FIFA 2026 World Cup.
- House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee
 - Informational briefing: Kansas Geological Survey program update by Dr. Jay Kalbas, director, Kansas Geological Survey.
- House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
 - Hearing on SB 335: Requiring public construction contracts to include a mutual waiver of consequential damages.
- House Judiciary Committee
 - Hearing on SB 358: Requiring individuals convicted of certain felonies to be held without bond in the county jail until sentencing.
- House Taxation Committee

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- Hearing on HB 2162: Excluding from sales taxation the service of installing or applying tangible personal property for reconstruction, restoration, remodeling, renovation, repair, or replacement of a building or facility.
- Hearing on HB 2782: Permitting county appraisers to request lease agreements from taxpayers when valuing property for property tax purposes.
- Hearing on SB 434: Providing for a new determination of disability for purposes of certain retailers' sales tax exemptions.

Thursday, Feb. 26

- Senate Transportation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2416: Creating the Kansas Motorsports Venue Protection Act to provide immunity to motorsports venues from certain civil actions.
- House Appropriations Committee
 - Informational hearing: Kansas Bureau of Investigation, Pittsburg Regional Crime Center.
 - Informational briefing: Kansas Housing Resources Corporation.
- House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee
 - Informational hearing on SB 379: Amending the Kansas 911 Act to establish a statewide emergency medical dispatch and telecommunicator cardiopulmonary resuscitation program.
 - Informational hearing on SB 380: Relating to electric vehicle charging services and requiring retail electric suppliers to provide nondiscriminatory rates and services.
- House Veterans Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2767: Establishing the Kansas Military Affairs Commission and prescribing its powers and duties.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2440: Excluding owners of oil leases from filing a request for exemption with the Board of Tax Appeals for property tax exemptions.
 - Hearing on HB 2464: Extending the number of years that new tax credits may be issued or earned for contributions to graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and employers of program graduates.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2515: Enacting the Virtual Currency Kiosk Consumer Protection Act; establishing requirements for operators; imposing transaction limits; and authorizing investigations of fraudulent money transmission.
- Senate Local Government Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2433: Clarifying county authority over the transfer or appropriation of water by placing such authority, except for domestic use, with the chief engineer and water transfer hearing panel.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
 - Hearing on HCR 5022: Applying to Congress to call a convention of states to establish term limits for members of Congress.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2479: Authorizing electronic monitoring with victim notification as a condition of release prior to trial for certain domestic-violence-related offenses.
 - Hearing on HB 2653: Requiring the secretary of corrections to assist inmates in obtaining identification and employment-related documentation prior to release.
- House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

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- Discussion on HB 2764: Prohibiting amendments to employment security law through budget provisos or temporary fiscal measures without specified review procedures; authorizing recognition of employer-sponsored supplemental unemployment benefit plans; reorganizing statutory sections; enhancing federal conformity; and updating criteria for suitable work and disqualification for unemployment benefits.
- Commerce Conversations: Associated General Contractors, Mike Gibson, and Trident Homes LLC, Chris Stemler.
- House Taxation Committee
 - Hearing on HB 2757: Repealing or discontinuing certain income tax credit incentives; extending the income tax credit for angel investors and aviation-related employment; and expanding transfer options and wage requirements in the High Performance Incentive Program.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

HOUSE BILLS

Public Health and Welfare

HB 2780: State Board of Mortuary Arts. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Rep. Tom Kessler (R-Wichita) and requested by Rep. Rick James (R-La Cygne), would authorize terramation of dead human bodies in the state of Kansas; specify that terramation facilities shall be licensed and comply with local and state building codes, zoning laws, ordinances, and environmental standards; mandate that only licensed terramation facility operators may perform terramation; require a terramation authorization form signed by an authorizing agent and a coroner's permit to terramate; prohibit the terramation of bodies with potentially hazardous implants unless removed; ensure that terramated remains are properly identified and packed; establish fees related to terramation; and add references to terramation where references to cremation exist in current law. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

Taxation

HB 2782: Property Taxation/Appraisers. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan) and requested by Rep. Kyle Hoffman (R-Coldwater), would permit county appraisers to request lease agreements from taxpayers when valuing property for property tax purposes. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Taxation and will be heard Feb. 25 at 3:30 p.m.

SENATE BILLS

Employment

SB 512: Unemployment Insurance. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Assessment and Taxation chaired by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), would remove the eight-week return to work expectation from the definition of temporary unemployment; delete the eight-week cap on temporary unemployment; remove the secretary's authority and criteria to grant eight-week extension increments, employer reporting duties for extensions, and the industry-specific eligibility for extensions; exclude payments under compliant employer-sponsored supplemental unemployment benefit plans from the definition of wages; remove the negative debt write-off and forgiveness mechanism that conditionally moved employers to rate group N11 for three years and the related option to avoid a negative debt write-off through voluntary contributions; and prohibit charging contributing employers in ready-mixed

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concrete and specified construction industries for benefit charges arising from temporary layoffs. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Assessment and Taxation.

Public Health and Welfare

SB 513: Child Care Subsidy/Department for Children and Families and Office of Early Childhood. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Ways and Means chaired by Sen. Rick Billinger (R-Goodland), would direct the Department for Children and Families in consultation with the Office of Early Childhood to issue a request for information and a request for proposal for the development, procurement, and implementation of software to provide child care subsidy payments to child care providers and would require reports to the legislature on such development, procurement, and implementation. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Public Health and Welfare chaired by Sen. Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora).

BILL TRACKING HISTORY

A history of the bills we are tracking as of Feb. 23, 2026, 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 cewatson@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

C. Edward Watson, II

Editor and Government Affairs & Public Policy Law Team Leader
316.291.9589
cewatson@foulston.com | [View Bio](#)

As a partner at Foulston Siefkin, Eddie represents clients in matters before state regulatory commissions, courts, and local government 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 government 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.

Susan (Sue) Peterson, PhD

Contributing Author and Government Affairs Consultant
785.341.6717
speterson@foulston.com | [View bio](#)

Sue, a government affairs consultant to Foulston Siefkin's government affairs & public policy practice group, is a strategic advocate, advisor, and connection to the Kansas Legislature, government agencies, and elected officials. She has built a robust

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and well-established network of state and federal lawmakers, corporate/academic leaders, and policymakers nationwide. She earned a Bachelor of Science in political science from Kansas State University, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Kansas, and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from KSU. Before joining Foulston, Sue served as Kansas State University's chief government relations officer for 34 years; her experience also includes staff positions in Kansas' executive and legislative branches.

Eric L. Sexton, PhD

Contributing Author and Government Affairs Consultant

316.371.7553

esexton@foulston.com | [View bio](#)

Eric, a government affairs consultant to Foulston Siefkin's government affairs & public policy practice group, has nearly 30 years' experience providing strategic direction and government relations services. As Wichita State University's governmental relations leader for 18 years, Eric developed lasting relationships at the local, state, and federal government level around Kansas. Eric holds a doctorate in political science from the University of Kansas and a Masters in Public Administration from Wichita State University, complementing his undergraduate business degree from Wichita State.

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