



## KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 12, 2026

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### WELCOME TO THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS

Welcome to the first edition of the *Foulston Kansas Legislative Insights* publication of the 2026 legislative session, which begins today, Monday, Jan. 12. The Foulston government affairs (GA) team will be on the ground in the capital nearly every day, gathering and delivering timely, relevant information as it unfolds. The 2026 legislative session is shaping up to be a dynamic one, with lawmakers set to consider, debate, and act on issues that matter to you — our clients and readers. We hope you will follow us throughout the session as we engage with elected officials in both the Kansas Legislature and the administration, analyze key developments, and share our insights with you.

Foulston's GA team is here to provide you the support you need, whether it is monitoring a general issue and reporting on it regularly, tracking a specific bill and working with you to develop a strategy to advance your interests, or directly advocating for a legislative change critical to your business or organization. If this sounds like something you need, please contact any member of our team. We would be honored to work with you and privileged to represent you in Topeka during this session.

### POLITICS, POLICY, AND PACE: WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE 2026 KANSAS LEGISLATURE

The 2026 Kansas legislative session could be one of the most politically charged and institutionally significant sessions in recent memory. Lawmakers will operate under a shortened calendar, a full statewide election cycle, and major constitutional and judicial questions that extend well beyond routine policymaking.

In addition to adopting a state budget and advancing core economic, education, and infrastructure priorities, legislators will navigate a rare convergence of events: Governor Laura Kelly's final State of the State address, a Kansas Supreme Court vacancy, a ballot campaign to change how justices are selected, and a high-stakes legal dispute between the governor and attorney general over who controls the state's legal authority. Together, these forces will shape not only what legislation moves, but how power is exercised inside the Capitol.

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Even before opening day, lawmakers have filed dozens of bills, setting the stage for fast-moving debates on property tax relief, school funding, workforce policy, transportation, water, and public safety. But 2026 will not be business as usual. Every statewide constitutional office will be on the ballot, all 125 seats in the Kansas House will be contested, and legislative leaders will be positioning themselves for both the fall campaigns and the next era of state leadership.

The result will be a Legislature that moves quickly, thinks politically, and responds sharply to constituent engagement and public visibility.

## HOW TO FOLLOW THE 2026 KANSAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2026 Kansas legislative session convenes on Monday, Jan. 12, with lawmakers returning to Topeka for what is expected to be a compressed and high-intensity session. First adjournment is anticipated in late March, followed by a brief veto session in April. With so many political and constitutional issues in play, the early weeks of the session will be especially consequential.

Opening week alone will establish the tone for the year. Gov. Kelly will deliver her final State of the State address. Kansas Supreme Court Chief Justice Eric Rosen will give his first State of the Judiciary address. The Kansas Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Kelly v. Kobach case, a dispute that could redefine who has the responsibility for and how Kansas controls its legal positions in conflicts with the federal government. Lawmakers will also receive the governor's budget proposal, although legislative leaders now build their own budget framework rather than using the governor's plan as the starting point.

Taken together, these events signal that the 2026 session will be driven as much by institutional power and constitutional structure as by spending and policy.

## 2026 Legislative Session Calendar

### WHERE TO TRACK BILLS, HEARINGS, AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

The Kansas Legislature website is the primary source for public information. Kansans can:

- Track bills and review full bill text
- View House and Senate calendars and committee agendas
- Watch or listen to live chamber and committee proceedings
- Follow proceedings through the Legislature's YouTube Channel
- Access journals, reports, and recently released documents

For direct assistance, the Legislative Hotline is available through the State Library of Kansas at (800) 432-3924 (in-state) or (785) 296-2149.

### CONNECTING WITH LAWMAKERS

Constituent engagement will matter more than ever in 2026. With every Kansas House seat, every statewide office, and a major judicial amendment on the ballot, legislators will be highly attuned to voter input, media coverage, and organized advocacy.

Kansans are encouraged to contact their legislators early and often, explain how legislation affects their communities, and participate in committee testimony when appropriate. Instructions for submitting written or oral testimony, including deadlines and procedures, are posted on the Kansas Legislature website. Clear, respectful, and timely communication is most effective, especially in a session where the political stakes are unusually high.

## WHEN THE GAVEL FALLS, THE WORK CONTINUES: INSIDE THE 2025 KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INTERIM

When the Kansas Legislature adjourned sine die in 2025, the work did not stop. It shifted. The interim period allows lawmakers to step away from floor debates and focus on research, oversight, and preparation. In 2025, legislative leadership deliberately expanded interim activity, signaling that the months between sessions would function as an active phase of policymaking, rather than a pause in legislative work.

### WHY THE INTERIM MATTERS

The interim serves as the Legislature's research season. Lawmakers meet through joint committees, special and standing committees, and task forces to study complex issues that cannot be fully resolved during the compressed regular session. These committees receive testimony, analyze information, and develop recommendations that often shape legislation in the following year.

While procedural in structure, interim committees play a substantive role. Their work helps frame budget priorities, test policy proposals, and signal where legislative momentum is building ahead of the next session.

### COMMITTEE TYPES AND THEIR ROLES

Joint committees include members from both chambers and are established in statute. They provide ongoing oversight in areas such as administrative rules and regulations, child welfare, corrections and juvenile justice, pensions and investments, information technology, and legislative budgeting.

Special and standing committees are approved by legislative leadership to examine time-intensive or politically sensitive issues that require focused attention outside the regular session. For the 2025 interim, leadership authorized eight special committees and 82 meeting days, an increase from 56 days the prior year. That expansion reflects a clear intent to devote sustained time to unresolved policy questions.

These committees examined issues including taxation, campaign finance transparency, health care workforce shortages, economic development incentives, sports wagering, and state government efficiency.

Task forces, commissions, and other authorized bodies often include legislators alongside state agency officials, stakeholders, and members of the public. Their work tends to be broader and more forward-looking, focusing on long-term structural challenges rather than immediate legislative outcomes.

### THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE COORDINATING COUNCIL

The interim does not operate independently. The Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC), composed of legislative leadership from both chambers, approves interim topics, assigns committee membership, sets the number of authorized meeting days, and approves meetings held outside the State Capitol.

In 2025, the LCC approved an expanded slate of interim committees and increased authorized meeting days, underscoring leadership's intent to elevate the role of the interim. That authority extends beyond committee oversight, a role highlighted when the council set and enforced interim deadlines and approved financing actions tied to attracting the Kansas City Chiefs to Kansas, demonstrating the LCC's ability to influence major policy and economic outcomes between legislative sessions.

### THE 2025 INTERIM AT A GLANCE

The 2025 interim was notable for both its scope and timing. Committees met throughout the spring, summer, and fall, with some concluding their work just days before the 2026 session convened.

Key topics studied included:

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- Tax policy and exemptions
- School finance and education funding sustainability
- Housing stock and economic development incentives
- Health and human services capacity
- State government efficiency and oversight
- Sports wagering regulation
- Water storage and long-term water policy

Each interim committee was required to submit a report to the Kansas Legislative Research department, ensuring findings and recommendations were documented, publicly available, and ready for legislative consideration.

## WHAT THE INTERIM SIGNALS FOR 2026

For Kansans following state policy, interim committees provide an early indicator of legislative priorities. The topics selected and the time devoted to them signal where debate is likely to intensify. During the 2025 interim session, sustained attention to taxation, school finance, workforce capacity, government efficiency, and water policy points to a full and consequential 2026 legislative agenda.

The Kansas Legislature may have adjourned last year, but policymaking continues. The interim is where ideas are refined, priorities are set, and the groundwork for the 2026 session is laid, before the opening gavel falls today.

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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](mailto:cewatson@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 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.

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