

## NEWSLETTERS



### KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 5, 2022

January 5, 2022

The 2022 Kansas Legislature opens on Monday, Jan. 10, with both chambers gaveling in at 2:00 p.m. As of Jan. 5, there have only been a handful of prefiled bills in each chamber. This is the second year of the two-year biennium. For your reference, 2022 House bills start with House Bill 2455. It was prefiled by Rep. Brett Fairchild and would authorize prison inmates to earn blood-donation credit for early discharge from prison. Senate bills begin with Senate Bill 316. It is sponsored by Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau and authorizes municipalities to adopt local zoning regulations that establish a minimum distance between group homes in single-family residential zones. Next week, we will publish our first issue highlighting bills introduced by the Legislature.

According to the latest Kansas Department of Revenue data released this week, December revenues were \$72 million, or 9.6% above the revised estimate from November. Compared with December of 2020, the revenue from income, sales, and other excise taxes was 18.2% above the estimate. The revenue numbers increase the likelihood that the elimination of the sales tax on food and other potential tax cuts will receive serious debate.

This week Secretary of State Scott Schwab released his three-point legislative agenda focused on strengthening election laws to enhance election integrity and security. First, Sec. Schwab will be proposing post-election audits for all federal, state, and local elections. Since taking office, Sec. Schwab has conducted more than 300 successful audits with local election officials. His second proposal addresses regular maintenance of the voter rolls. Currently, county election officers must wait two federal election cycles following a confirmation notice to remove inactive voters from the list. The third proposal addresses securing election equipment. Kansas counties have not been connecting voting machines to the internet since 2006. To enhance election security, he is proposing legislation to prohibit Kansas voting machines from being connected to the internet and enhancing security of electronic pollbooks.

Next week, Gov. Laura Kelly will be delivering her State of the State Address on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. outlining her 2022 legislative agenda.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Eric Sexton to the Foulston government affairs team. This experienced government affairs consultant brings strong relationships at the local, state, and federal government level to the



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team and to Foulston's clients. A brief bio about Eric is shown below.

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Kansas Legislative Insights is a publication developed by the Governmental Affairs & 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 Affairs & Public Policy Law practice group leader, James P. Rankin at 785.233.3600 or [jrankin@foulston.com](mailto:jrankin@foulston.com). Learn more about the authors below:

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As a partner at Foulston Siefkin, Jim's practice focuses on employee benefits law relating to public, private, governmental, and tax-exempt organizations. A large part of his work involves insurance regulatory and compliance issues in many industries, including healthcare. Jim has been selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® and the *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers*® list. He is the firm's representative with State Law Resources, Inc., a national network of independent law firms selected for their expertise in administrative, regulatory, and government relations at the state and federal level.

## **Gary L. Robbins**

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Gary, a governmental affairs consultant to Foulston Siefkin's Governmental Affairs & Public Policy practice group, provides legislative monitoring and lobbying services for Foulston's governmental relations clients. He holds a bachelor of science degree in history and political science from Southwestern College and a master's degree in labor economics from Wichita State University. Throughout his extensive career, Gary has served as CLE Director to the Kansas Bar Association and as Executive Director of the Kansas Optometric Association.

## **Eric L. Sexton, PhD**

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Eric, a governmental affairs consultant to Foulston Siefkin's Governmental Affairs & Public Policy practice group, has nearly 30 years' experience providing strategic direction and government relations services. As Wichita State University's government relations leader for 18 years, Eric developed lasting relationships at the local, state, and federal government level around Kansas.



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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.

### **C. Edward Watson, II**

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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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