



HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS



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Bipartisan Backed Legislation Related To Cannabis, is being considered by both the Kansas House and Senate as a first step toward the state eventually legalizing the drug. The House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee is assessing an amnesty proposal that would release anyone imprisoned for marijuana-related offenses and expunge their arrest records for those convictions. Meanwhile, the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee is reviewing the Veterans First Medical Cannabis Act, which would allow in-state cultivation, distribution, sale, and use of medical cannabis solely to military veterans and active-duty personnel with valid medical ID cards. Kansas is one of only 3 states that have yet to legalize the drug for medical use. While both bills have support from lawmakers the recently appointed head of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and the new state Attorney General have expressed their adamant opposition to both plans. However, if either bill makes it to the Governor's desk she has already confirmed they would have her full support and would be signed promptly.

Governor Kelly Placed the First Legalized Sports Bet for the KC Chiefs to win the Super Bowl, followed by more than 2 million other people placing online wagers on the same game that took place last weekend. State revenue from sports betting has far exceeded expectations so far. Early estimates predicted it would generate \$1.8 million in the fiscal year 2023, which ends July 1st, but it has already brought in \$2.7 million just from September through January with February yet to be tallied. The Governor announced her winnings will be donated to The Mahomies Foundation, a nonprofit established by KC Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes to support initiatives that focus on children in communities that are lacking health and wellness resources.

The House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice is considering a bill that would require any adult roommate, spouse, parent, or any other relatives who reside with a sexual offender who is out of prison on parole, probation, conditional release, a suspended sentence, under post-release supervision or in a community correctional services program to act as their primary schedule supervisor legally liable to report the offender whenever they fail to comply with their court-ordered time and place restrictions or suffer fines and possible misdemeanor charges. Supporters of the bill believe it will provide an additional safety measure for communities while critics argue it will infringe on the personal time and privacy of people who would be forced to take on a significant responsibility without compensation.

The House Financial Institutions & Pensions Committee heard testimony on a bill to allocate \$250 million from the State General Fund to repurchase bonds issued by the Kansas Development Finance Authority in 2021 to pay off the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System's unfunded pension liabilities. Director of the Budget, Adam Proffitt told lawmakers the move would result in interest savings of \$177,445,984 noting that he and Governor Kelly think the legislation would be "a very good idea". State Treasurer Steven Johnson encouraged lawmakers to stay focused on saving money and paying down debts such as this one as a fiscally responsible step in preparation for what he termed an "inevitable recession".

The House Health & Human Services Committee held a hearing regarding a change to the legal classification for drug testing strips. Currently, Kansas law labels them as drug paraphernalia, making their use, possession, sale, or distribution illegal. Making them available over the counter for regular use could save lives by quickly detecting fentanyl and ketamine overdoses as well as prevent the sexual assault of those secretly dosed with gamma-hydroxybutyric acid commonly known as the date-rape drug. The bill under consideration would also establish a Kansas overdose fatality review board.

The House Legislative Modernization Committee voted this week to expand Governor Kelly's ban on state owned electronic devices downloading the social media app known as TikTok by including all other websites and apps owned by its Chinese based parent company ByteDance. The new bill would also prohibit running the app on private devices while using the open wifi systems at the Kansas Statehouse and at all state-funded schools. Members moved the legislation to the House floor on February 13th where it was passed by a bipartisan vote of 109-12 just three days later. 11 other states have already passed similar bans.

The Kansas Department of Health & Environment reported in their weekly update that the state surpassed 10K COVID-19 deaths this week. The ominous statistic was a harsh reminder that the pandemic may have passed but the virus lingers on and continues to take a toll on the state. Additionally, this week, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee heard testimony on legislation that would limit KDHE's authority on rules and regulations that allowed the agency to designate diseases as infectious or contagious, to quarantine or require testing of people afflicted with or exposed to diseases they consider infectious or contagious, and to mandate measures to prevent the spread of any disease, including smallpox, without legislative approval.

The Senate Commerce Committee heard testimony from Kansas natives now working in the film industry who were there to urge the lawmakers to budget \$10 million a year in tax incentives for movie and TV show producers to encourage them to bring their movie and TV show projects to the state. Thirty-seven other states already offer similar incentives including those that border Kansas.

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