



HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS



2025 Legislature Final Week

April 14, 2025

Volume 11 Issue 13

BILLS PASSED

- SB 9: (House Substitute For) Security Of Military Installations
- SB 35: State Property Tax Reduction
- SB 117: Clarifying Property Tax Exemptions For Strother Field Airport
- SB 137: Authorizing The Sale Of Forfeited Firearms To Licensed Dealers (Signed)
- SB 227: Historic Preservation Tax Credits
- SB 250: Enacting The Right To Try For Individualized Treatments Act
 - *Governor Urged The Legalization Of Medical Marijuana Alongside The End-Of-Life Care Options
- HB 2022: Election Scheduling
- HB 2031: Concerning Driving And Motorcycle Instructor Licensing
- HB 2039: Healthcare Definitions And Emergency Services
- HB 2056: Allowed To Become Law Without Signature
 - *Governor Kelly Expressed Reservations About The Clarity Regarding Election Official Impersonation
- HB 2060: (Senate Substitute For) State Official Expense Reimbursements
- HB 2061: Expanding the state's definition of critical infrastructure to include broadband cables
- HB 2075: Child Safety Protocols In Law Enforcement
- HB 2088: Expedited Residential Building Permits
- HB 2155: Sheriff Liability Related To Jail Operations
- HB 2169: Addressing Remediation Costs In Johnson County
- HB 2195: Establishing A Technical College Operating Grant Fund
- HB 2249: Establishing A South Central Regional Mental Health Hospital
- HB 2255: Updating The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- HB 2263: Designating A Future Interchange On K-10 Highway As The Kris Norton Memorial
- HB 2280: Definition Of Veteran Aligned With Federal Regulations And
 - *Also Supports Military Spouses' Occupational Licensure Transfers
- HB 2304: Mandating The Reporting Of Local Economic Development Incentives
- HB 2313: Protecting State Computer Systems From Foreign Ai
- HB 2334: Updating Insurance Industry Regulations
- HB 2342: Authorizing Background Checks For Sensitive State Positions
- HB 2371: Amending Business Entity Acts

ACTION ON BILLS VETOED DURING LEGISLATIVE RECESS

Governor Kelly vetoed several bills, citing concerns ranging from fiscal irresponsibility and infringement on local control to the overreach of special interests and unconstitutional legislative interference. Specifically, Governor Kelly rejected **SB 269** due to its potential to revert the state to previous detrimental tax policies favoring corporations and the wealthy, warning of significant annual revenue losses. ***The veto of SB 269 was***

overridden. **HB 2062** was opposed as an attempt to interfere with private medical decisions, contradicting the will of Kansans. **The veto of HB 2062 was overridden.** The Senate Substitute for **HB 2240** was deemed an unconstitutional legislative overreach into the executive branch's Medicaid administration, potentially jeopardizing benefits for vulnerable populations. **The veto of HB 2240 was overridden.** The Senate Substitute for **HB 2382** was vetoed for undermining the authority of the State Board of Education and promoting a potentially biased curriculum. **The veto of HB 2382 was overridden.** *Overrides were not attempted on the following vetoed bills and the Governor's veto prevailed* - **HB 2028** was rejected due to its potential negative economic impact on rural communities by limiting non-resident waterfowl hunting. The Senate Substitute for **HB 2228** was vetoed over concerns about unclear language regarding the Attorney General's involvement in local legal matters and retroactive application. **SB 18** was vetoed for its provision to funnel license plate royalties to a political organization, setting a concerning precedent.

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD OVERHAUL

The House and Senate passed **HB 2045**, a bipartisan initiative poised to reshape the state's early childhood landscape. The legislation aims to streamline governance by establishing a new Kansas Office of Early Childhood, consolidating the responsibilities of three existing departments overseeing child care. Beyond structural changes, the bill introduces loosened regulations for child care providers, including adjustments to education requirements for some staff and modifications to adult-to-child ratios. A notable and debated provision within the bill also allows parents or guardians to opt out of mandatory child vaccinations by providing a signed statement citing sincerely held religious beliefs. While proponents, including Governor Laura Kelly, tout the bill as a crucial step towards efficiency and improved access to high-quality early childhood services, several lawmakers voiced concerns regarding the lack of a fiscal note, the limited opportunity for debate due to its emergence in a conference committee report, and the potential long-term implications of creating a new state agency without thorough vetting. Despite these objections, the bill garnered substantial support in both chambers and now awaits the Governor's signature.

KANSAS HEALTH AUTHORITY SHIFT

The Kansas Legislature has overridden Governor Laura Kelly's veto of **SB 29**, a measure that significantly alters the authority of state and county health officials in managing infectious disease outbreaks. The new law opens these officials to civil action for decisions regarding quarantines and removes their power to prohibit public gatherings in such situations. While the Senate saw minimal debate, the House witnessed impassioned opposition, with representatives like Rep. Barbara Ballard emphasizing the crucial role of public health departments during crises. Concerns were also raised about the resurgence of preventable diseases, exemplified by Rep. Tom Sawyer's personal account of the impact of measles before widespread vaccination and the current outbreak in southwest Kansas. Governor Kelly, in her veto statement, argued that SB 29 jeopardizes public health by hindering professionals' ability to implement necessary measures to control the spread of dangerous infections. However, Sen. Beverly Gossage, a proponent of the bill, countered that it does not eliminate quarantine authority but rather introduces a "probable cause" requirement and allows individuals wrongly subjected to isolation or quarantine to seek civil action within 72 hours. This legislative action marks a significant shift in the state's approach to public health emergency response, potentially impacting the ability of health officials to swiftly and decisively manage future infectious disease threats.

KANSAS INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION LAW

Governor Kelly has recently signed **HB 2061** into law, significantly expanding the definition of a critical infrastructure facility within Kansas to now encompass telecommunications and broadband infrastructure. This legislative action extends crucial legal protections to vital components such as aboveground and belowground lines, cables, wires, antennas, towers, and related structures essential for telecommunications and video services. The aim of this amendment is to bolster the security of these facilities and minimize service disruptions for Kansans, recognizing the indispensable role of reliable high-speed internet in today's economy, healthcare access, and educational opportunities.

KANSAS INNOVATION CHAMPION AGAIN

Kansas has been recognized as an Innovation Champion, the highest distinction, in the Consumer Technology Association 2025 Scorecard. This marks the third time that Kansas has achieved this recognition, highlighting the state's successful policies in attracting technological innovation across diverse industries. The CTA's seventh annual scorecard evaluated all 50 states across 54 indicators within 11 categories, with only 12 states earning the IC title with Kansas only one of six to have received the honor previously. This year's scorecard introduced four new categories – Blockchain, Data Privacy, Grid Preparedness, and Manufacturing – alongside the seven carried over from 2023, reflecting the evolving foundations necessary for fostering technological innovation and underscoring Kansas' commitment to economic growth and quality of life.

KANSAS MEDICAID OVERSIGHT SHIFT

A significant development in Kansas' healthcare landscape has unfolded as the state Legislature passed **HB 2284**, overriding Governor Kelly's veto, in response to a contentious Medicaid provider selection process that saw Aetna Better Health of Kansas lose its bid to continue as a managed care organization under the \$4 billion KanCare program. The previous selection process, which resulted in Aetna's unsuccessful bid despite a tied score with Healthy Blue, and subsequent allegations of flawed procedures and destroyed scoring documentation, sparked legal battles and legislative criticism regarding transparency. **HB 2284** mandates the executive branch to establish policies addressing issues raised by Aetna's litigation, including the prohibition of record destruction, the adoption of clear tie breaking procedures, and enhanced transparency with the Legislature throughout the procurement process. Governor Kelly vehemently opposed it, citing a "dramatic overreach" into executive and judicial authority and raising concerns about potential conflicts of interest and a compromised procurement process. A key point of contention was the addition of a new appeals process, where a legislative committee would review bid disputes, replacing the existing judicial review. Despite concerns regarding the interplay between the new legislative panel and judicial review, the veto override passed both the Senate and the House, signaling a major shift in the oversight of Kansas' Medicaid provider selection process.

KANSAS MUNICIPAL WHISTLEBLOWER ACT

Governor Laura Kelly signed **HB 2160** into law, establishing the Municipal Employee Whistleblower Act, a significant step towards enhancing transparency and accountability within local government. This bipartisan legislation extends crucial legal protections to municipal employees who report or reveal unlawful or dangerous conduct, addressing a historical gap where such safeguards were primarily limited to state and federal employees. By defining malfeasance and misappropriation as unlawful conduct, the Act aims to protect genuine whistleblowers while distinguishing them from those with mere dissatisfaction. Supporters emphasize that this measure will foster greater public trust by ensuring that local government employees can come forward with concerns without fear of reprisal, ultimately safeguarding taxpayer resources and promoting ethical governance at the local level.

KANSAS TAX REVENUE CHANGES

Substantial modifications to Kansas' tax framework continued to reshape the state's revenue streams throughout March, according to official reports. Adjustments to the state's retail sales tax policy, specifically the elimination of the 6.5% tax on grocery items, contributed to an \$89 million decrease in collections during the first three quarters of the fiscal year compared to the same period in the previous year. Despite this change, the sales tax and its associated compensating use tax have generated \$2.6 billion for the state since the fiscal year began on July 1st. Legislative and executive branch agreement last year resulted in the elimination of a personal income tax bracket and a reduction of the highest individual income tax rate to 5.58%, effective retroactively to January 1, 2024. This was implemented alongside a decrease in the state's corporate income tax rate from 4% to 3.5%, also effective January 1, 2024. The Kansas Department of Revenue reported an \$88 million year-to-date decrease in corporate income tax collections, exceeding state analysts' projections by over \$11 million. However, this decline was more than offset by a surprising \$200 million increase in individual income tax collections through March compared to the prior year, with state analysts underestimating this growth by \$187 million. Consequently, three-quarters into the fiscal year, Kansas state government's combined corporate and

individual income tax revenue was over \$110 million higher than the previous year. Overall, the Department of Revenue reported total tax revenue of \$6.9 billion for the current fiscal year, a \$47 million (0.7%) increase from the previous fiscal year, exceeding state financial analysts' predictions by \$165 million. The consensus revenue group, comprising representatives from various state agencies and university economists, scheduled an April 17th meeting to assess economic conditions and revise state revenue forecasts. Meanwhile, the Legislature recently transmitted a new state budget to the governor, which some predict could lead to a \$461 million budget shortfall within three years. The governor expressed concerns about the Legislature's spending plan, drawing parallels to past tax reduction policies that resulted in budget difficulties.

KANSAS WORKFORCE AND SAFETY

Governor Kelly has signed **HB 2069**, a significant piece of legislation that enacts interstate compacts for school psychologists, dietitians, cosmetologists, and physician assistants. This pivotal move aims to reduce barriers for qualified professionals seeking to practice in Kansas, facilitating license portability across state lines and enhancing workforce flexibility, particularly for military spouses and those in the healthcare sector. Proponents emphasize that these compacts will not only attract talent and foster economic development but also streamline administrative processes and increase the availability of licensed professionals while preserving state regulatory authority. In addition to this key workforce initiative,

NALOXONE ACCESS EXPANDED

Governor Kelly has signed **Substitute Bill for SB 193** into law, a bipartisan measure that eliminates administrative obstacles preventing law enforcement agencies across Kansas from readily obtaining and administering naloxone, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal medication. This crucial legislation removes the previous requirement mandating agencies to have a medical director or licensed pharmacist to procure naloxone, a significant hurdle particularly for smaller departments facing compliance costs and healthcare workforce shortages. By streamlining access now that naloxone is available over the counter, the bill empowers all law enforcement officers to swiftly provide critical care during opioid-related emergencies, potentially saving countless lives. This action builds upon Governor Kelly's ongoing commitment to combating the opioid epidemic, which includes allocating funds for naloxone in schools, increasing resources for drug enforcement, decriminalizing fentanyl test strips, and enacting the Good Samaritan Law.

NEW JUDGE APPOINTED

Governor Kelly has appointed Jennifer O'Hare of Lincoln, Kansas, as the new judge for the 12th Judicial District. This position was created through Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order 2024-JA-096, which eliminated a district magistrate position. Judge O'Hare brings over 20yrs of experience as a county attorney and more than 4yrs as the Lincoln County Magistrate Judge for the 12th District, as well as service as a municipal judge. Governor Kelly highlighted O'Hare's extensive legal background and community ties as valuable assets to the district. Judge O'Hare expressed her honor and commitment to serving the 12th Judicial District with integrity and fairness. Judge O'Hare will need to stand for a retention vote in the next general election after serving one year.

KANSAS LICENSE PLATE CHANGES

Governor Kelly has recently signed **HB 2201** into law, introducing three new specialty license plate options for Kansas residents: the National Future Farmers of America organization, the Route 66 Association of Kansas, and a blackout-style plate. This bipartisan legislation aims to streamline license plate issuance procedures and provide Kansans with more opportunities to express their interests while contributing to the state's economy. Revenue generated from the FFA and Route 66 plates will directly benefit their respective foundations, while a \$50 fee for the blackout plate will support the Kansas Department of Revenue's license plate replacement fund. Beyond the new designs, the bill also establishes a license plate replacement fund and modifies requirements for license plate issuance, production, and military license plate application documentation, enhancing efficiency for veterans and all Kansans.

RURAL ART REVITALIZATION

The Kansas Department of Commerce is continuing its initiative to revitalize rural communities through public art, earmarking \$125,000 in 2025 to support new mural projects in towns with populations under 15,000. Following the success of 12 mural projects in 2024, this program, spearheaded by the Office of Rural Prosperity, aims to enhance the attractiveness of smaller communities, engage residents and visitors, and celebrate local history and culture. Examples of impactful murals in Holton, Medicine Lodge, and Beloit demonstrate the potential of public art to bring life to vacant spaces. The grant program will offer a maximum award of \$7,500, requiring a 100% match, with at least one-fourth in cash and the remainder through in-kind contributions. Applications will be accepted until May 16, with the deadline for mural completion set for December 31. Lt. Gov. David Toland emphasizes the power of public art as a tool for rural revitalization and statewide prosperity.

RURAL ROADWAY SAFETY FUNDS

Governor Kelly has announced that 11 rural roadway projects will receive a total of \$8.1 million in federal funds through the Kansas Department of Transportation's High Risk Rural Roads Program. Made possible through the IKE Transportation Program, these projects address much needed upgrades of rural roadways. By improving intersections, signage, and other critical roadway features, Kansas can build safety momentum. The HRRR program is federally funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program and an additional \$1.6 million in local funds will be utilized for the selected projects. This year's 11 HRRR projects were selected from 29 applications seeking \$29.9 million in funds. KDOT's Secretary Calvin Reed noted that over 20% of fatal and serious injury crashes occur on county roads so strong partnerships are necessary to achieve the goal of zero roadway fatalities. Projects in this program fall into one of two categories: Systemic (encompassing a local roadway network) or Site Specific.

UTILITY WILDFIRE LIABILITY LAW

Kansas has enacted **HB 2107**, a new law establishing a defined legal pathway for individuals and entities to seek economic damages from electric public utilities in the event of wildfires or other fire incidents demonstrably caused by the utility provider. Driven by the state's susceptibility to wildfires, this legislation intends to motivate utility companies to proactively identify and implement reasonable measures to mitigate wildfire risks. The new framework allows those affected to pursue compensation for damages within a two-year period following an incident. Proponents of the bill highlight its aim to balance providing legal recourse for victims of utility-caused fires with maintaining a fair legal environment for utility companies, thereby preventing potentially excessive judgments that could adversely affect energy affordability for consumers. Additionally, HB 2107 mandates the Kansas Corporation Commission to organize a workshop centered on wildfire risks, utility preparedness, mitigation strategies, and cost recovery, indicating a forward-looking strategy to bolster the state's overall preparedness for wildfires.

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