



## KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | MARCH 16, 2026

### MARCH MADNESS AT THE STATEHOUSE

As March Madness begins across the country, the Kansas Legislature's own bracket is taking shape. Lawmakers advanced some proposals with little trouble, fought to keep others alive, and knocked a few out of the tournament altogether. A surprise House vote ended one property tax amendment's run, while several new proposals entered the field and others moved closer to the next round. At the Statehouse last week, the action included more than a few legislative buzzer-beater moments.

### TIPOFF: STADIUM AUTHORITY BILL WINS ITS FIRST ROUND

The opening whistle has sounded on a proposal that could shape the future of professional sports in Kansas. House Bill 2793, which would create a Kansas Sports Facilities Authority to finance, construct, and oversee major sports venues, cleared the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee following hearings earlier last week.

The bill would establish a public authority responsible for financing, constructing, owning, and overseeing major professional sports facilities and related infrastructure in Kansas. The legislation creates the authority as a political subdivision of the state governed by a board and empowered to coordinate project development, financing, and long-term facility management.

Although written broadly to support major sports infrastructure, discussion during the hearings focused largely on a potential new NFL stadium project in Kansas. Supporters described the proposed authority as the governance structure needed to implement the state's previously approved stadium financing framework and to provide the public ownership model commonly used for professional sports venues.

Committee discussion centered on how the authority would operate and how oversight would function. Legislators asked detailed questions about board composition, transparency requirements, and the manner in which the authority would coordinate with local governments and private partners on a project of this scale.

The committee reported HB 2793 favorably for passage. The bill now moves to the House calendar and could be debated by the full House in the coming weeks. With its first committee hurdle cleared, the proposal advances to the next round as lawmakers weigh economic opportunity alongside public accountability.

## THE BRACKET BUSTER (UPSET OF THE WEEK)

### SCR 1616: Property Tax Constitutional Amendment

Every tournament has an upset. Last week, it happened on the Kansas House floor.

SCR 1616, a proposed constitutional amendment aimed at limiting growth in residential property tax assessments, failed to advance after the House rejected the measure on a 37-78 vote. Constitutional amendments must receive a two-thirds vote in both chambers before they can be submitted to voters, and the proposal fell well short of that threshold.

The resolution would have reduced the constitutional assessment rate applied to residential property, lowering the share of a home's value used to calculate property taxes.

House debate reflected the broader policy tension surrounding property tax relief. Supporters argued the amendment would give homeowners more predictability as property valuations continue to rise. Opponents questioned whether altering the constitutional classification system could create long-term consequences for school finance and local government budgets.

During debate, legislators offered a floor amendment proposing additional changes to the assessment structure and related provisions. The amendment did not gain support, and the House later rejected the resolution itself.

In March Madness terms, SCR 1616 entered the week with momentum after clearing the Senate and advancing to the House calendar. Instead, it became the Legislature's Bracket Buster — a closely watched proposal knocked out before reaching the next round.

## THE TOP SEED: PROPERTY TAXES

### HB 2769 Advances from the Property Tax Bracket

Property taxes remain one of the session's most closely watched policy issues. While many proposals in that policy bracket continue to compete for attention, one measure has already moved forward.

HB 2769 addresses the governance of subordinate service taxing areas created by municipalities. These entities oversee services and infrastructure within defined areas and, in some cases, may levy property taxes or adopt budgets that spend taxpayer funds.

The bill requires appointed voting members of governing bodies for these taxing areas to reside within the taxing area when the entity has authority to impose property taxes or control spending for services provided there. Supporters argued that residents who pay those taxes should have a direct voice in decisions affecting their community.

During House debate, lawmakers considered several amendments. The House adopted one amendment allowing individuals who live outside the taxing area to serve as nonvoting members of the governing body. Other proposed amendments were not adopted.

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The House passed HB 2769 94-25 on March 12, sending the bill to the Senate. The Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing March 16.

## **OVERTIME ROUND: CONFERENCE COMMITTEES TAKE THE FLOOR**

As the legislative session enters its final stretch, several bills are moving into what could be called the overtime round of the process: conference committees.

For a bill to become law, the House and Senate must pass identical versions. When the chambers approve different versions, leaders appoint a six-member conference committee — three members from each chamber — to negotiate the differences and produce a final agreement. The committee's report then returns to both chambers for a straight up-or-down vote and cannot be amended.

The shift comes as key deadlines approach. Tuesday, March 17, marks the final day for most committees to meet, and Friday, March 20, is the last day for general floor debate on most bills. After that point, legislative action largely moves to conference negotiations.

According to current legislative tracking, 41 bills are now in conference committee. Of those, 13 were placed in conference during the 2026 session, while 28 originate from legislation introduced in 2025. Over the next week, and particularly during the March 23-27 conference period, lawmakers will work to reconcile those competing versions and determine which proposals make it to the final horn of the 2026 legislative session.

## **LATE TOURNAMENT ENTRY: RENEWABLE ENERGY TAX PROPOSAL ENTERS THE POLICY BRACKET**

A late-arriving proposal in the Kansas Legislature has quickly entered the policy bracket, raising new questions about how the state taxes renewable energy and funds property tax relief.

SB 534 received a hearing on Friday, March 13, in the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee. The bill would impose two taxes on renewable energy facilities with at least 5,000 kilowatts of generating capacity: a capacity tax of \$4 per kilowatt of installed capacity and a production tax of one-tenth of a cent per kilowatt hour of electricity generated.

Revenue from the taxes would be deposited into a new Property Tax Relief Fund and transferred to the State School District Finance Fund to help reduce the statewide school property tax levy from 20 mills to 19.5 mills for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 school years.

Supporters argue the proposal would allow Kansas to capture revenue from renewable energy development and apply it toward broader property tax relief.

Opponents raised concerns during the hearing that the taxes could increase electricity costs and potentially discourage future energy investment in the state. Some also questioned whether the policy would reduce overall taxes or simply shift costs from property taxes to electricity rates.

Committee discussion also included background on Kansas' current tax treatment of renewable energy projects, which historically have received property tax exemptions, and whether similar taxes apply to other forms of electricity generation.

The Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee is expected to continue its work on the bill next week.

## **BRACKET WATCH: WHAT TO WATCH NEXT WEEK**

**Upcoming Week: March 16–20, 2026**

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## Monday, March 16

- House Federal and State Affairs Committee
  - Hearing on SB 452: Including federal law enforcement officers in the definition of law enforcement officer used in certain crimes and traffic provisions and clarifying that enforcement of federal law is covered under the Tort Claims Act.
- House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
  - Joint Informational Hearing on HB 2648: Enacting the Social Media and Telecommunications Fraud Accountability Act; requiring social media platforms to exercise reasonable care in preventing the dissemination of fraudulent advertisements; prohibiting falsely identifying names or numbers on telephone caller ID systems and the unauthorized use of a bank name in electronic advertisements or solicitations; and making violations of the act an unconscionable act or practice under the Kansas Consumer Protection Act.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2747: Specifying that courts shall consider certain factors in determining whether a prior violation of law is comparable to any act described in certain driving under the influence crimes when calculating a person's criminal history score under the Kansas sentencing guidelines act.
  - Hearing on HB 2527: Prohibiting courts from assigning a defendant to work release if the defendant is required to register as a sex offender for certain crimes and prohibiting the secretary of corrections from granting an inmate leave from confinement except for specified purposes if the inmate is required to register as a sex offender for certain crimes or is serving a sentence for certain crimes that require registration as a sex offender.
  - Hearing on SB 478: Increasing the criminal penalties for assault or battery of a utility or communications employee.
- House Education Committee
  - Hearing on SB 406: Directing the governor to approve eligible programs for workforce Pell Grants and providing requirements for the State Workforce Development Board with regard to eligibility, approval, and financing of such programs.
  - Hearing on SB 340: Prohibiting Kansas Promise Scholarship awards from being used to fund corequisite courses.
  - Hearing on SB 381: Requiring instruction to provide students with an understanding of Communist and Socialist regimes and ideologies and requiring students to pass an American civics examination in order to graduate with a high school diploma.
- House Higher Education Budget Committee
  - Possible action on HB 2798: Granting authority to research universities regarding transactions involving real property, buildings, infrastructure, easements, and the procurement of goods and services and exempting such universities from statutes governing such transactions.
- House Transportation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 404: Modifying the registration period for personalized license plates and authorizing county treasurers to charge increased fees for vehicle registration transactions.
- House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
  - Presentation: Kansas Biological Survey, Sara Baer
- House Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2714: Providing for a decreased gallonage tax on beer and cereal malt beverages that are produced and packaged within the United States.

## Tuesday, March 17

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- House Federal and State Affairs Committee
  - Hearing on SB 1: Exempting the state of Kansas from daylight saving time but providing for moving to permanent daylight saving time upon an act of Congress requiring such move.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2453: Requiring applications for advance voting ballots be filed by the 14th day prior to election day, requiring advance voting in person be completed by noon on the Sunday prior to election day, extending the time for transmittal of advance voting ballots to 22 days prior to an election, and ending voter registration 23 days prior to election day.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2651: Authorizing a challenge to a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity as soon as practicable after discovery of fraud, duress, or mistake of fact; specifying that certain genetic testing results constitute a change of circumstances that warrants a court finding of material mistake of fact; and providing for recovery of actual damages in exceptional circumstances.
  - Hearing on HB 2537: Increasing the penalties for the crime of sexual extortion when an offender is 18 years of age or older and the victim is less than 18 years of age or a dependent adult, creating the crimes of aggravated sexual extortion causing great bodily harm and aggravated sexual extortion causing death, and requiring the attorney general to prepare and provide educational materials and information concerning such crimes.
- House Transportation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 439: Enacting the Utility Railroad Crossing Act and establishing a process and limitations for utilities to interact with railroad right-of-way.

## BILL INTRODUCTIONS

### HOUSE BILLS

#### Commerce

**HB 2793: Sports Facilities Authority Act.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Appropriations chaired by Rep. Troy Waymaster (R-Bunker Hill) and requested by Rep. Sean Tarwater (R-Overland Park), would establish the Sports Authority Act, which would establish a sports authority to provide for the construction, financing, and management of certain sports facilities and sports facility infrastructure and create venues for professional sports and other events. This bill was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development chaired by Rep. Sean Tarwater and was heard on Tuesday, March 10, at 1:30 p.m.

#### Taxation

**HB 2794: Property Tax.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan) and requested by Rep. Francis Averkamp (R-St. Marys), would decrease the rate of ad valorem tax imposed by a school district. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Taxation.

**HB 2795: Property Tax.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan) and requested by Rep. Francis Averkamp (R-St. Marys), would decrease the rate of ad valorem tax imposed by a school district. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Taxation.

**HB 2796: Sales Tax/Exemptions.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan) and requested by Rep. Henry Helgersen (R-Eastborough), would provide an exemption for charitable organizations and would require a \$100 fee for registration of the exemption certificate. This bill has been referred

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to the Committee on Taxation.

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS

**HCR 5035: Property Tax.** This House Concurrent Resolution, introduced by the Committee on Taxation chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan), would amend Section 1 of Article 11 of the Kansas Constitution to create an exemption from school district property tax levies for residential property that is owned by and is the principal place of business for a person 60 years of age or older. This House Concurrent Resolution has been referred to the Committee on Taxation.

## SENATE BILLS

### Taxation

**SB 534: Excise Tax/Renewable Energy.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Assessment and Taxation chaired by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), would impose a nameplate capacity tax and a production tax upon certain wind farms and solar facilities; would credit the nameplate capacity tax and production tax revenue to the Property Tax Relief Fund; would create the Property Tax Relief Fund; would transfer moneys from the Property Tax Relief Fund to the State School District Finance Fund; and would decrease the statewide property tax levy for schools. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Assessment and Taxation and was heard Friday, March 13, at 9:30 a.m.

### BILL TRACKING HISTORY

A history of the bills we are tracking as of March 16, 2026, can be found here. Most recent actions are listed first.

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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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