



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | MARCH 23, 2026

The Kansas Legislature has entered its final phase, where the most important decisions no longer happen on the floor, but in negotiations. With dozens of bills now in conference committees and key policy issues still unresolved, this week marked a clear shift from debate to deal-making. As lawmakers work toward final agreements, the focus turns to what will ultimately move — and what will be left behind.

FINAL DECISIONS SHIFT TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

With the legislature beginning the last week of the session, most remaining bills now move through conference committees rather than the traditional floor process. When the House and Senate pass different versions of a bill, one chamber votes to non-concur and requests a conference. Leadership appoints conferees from each chamber to negotiate a final version.

This week marked a clear turning point. Both chambers issued multiple non-concur motions, appointed conference committees across a wide range of bills, and adopted conference committee reports on others. Negotiations — not floor debate — now drive outcomes.

There are currently about 60 bills in conference, but only a handful have clearly scheduled, bill-specific meetings, with many committees instead posting broad “all bills in conference” time blocks — an early sign of the backlog that will move quickly next week as the legislature approaches second adjournment on March 27.

Conference committees do more than resolve differences. They may include any germane provision, often incorporating language from bills that have already passed one chamber. That flexibility makes conference committees a central tool in final negotiations.

If conferees reach agreement, they issue a conference committee report. Both chambers then vote up or down — no amendments allowed. If adopted, the bill is passed and sent to the governor.

At this stage of the session, conference committees determine what ultimately becomes law. For those interested in tracking activity in real time, scheduled conference committee meetings can be found here on the Kansas Legislature’s website.

HOUSE MOVES PROPERTY TAX AMENDMENT FORWARD

As property tax proposals continue to evolve this session, the Kansas House advanced SCR 1603 this week, offering a constitutional approach to rising property valuations.

The resolution would require property to be valued at the lower of current fair market value or an average of values over time, aiming to reduce sharp increases in taxable valuations. It also authorizes the legislature to provide by law for the freezing or limiting of valuations on owner-occupied homes of qualifying seniors. The proposal sets a constitutional framework while leaving key decisions — such as how averaging is calculated and who qualifies for relief — to future legislative action.

The House approved the measure with the required two-thirds majority, marking a significant step as lawmakers continue to search for a workable path on property tax relief.

Debate reflected both urgency and uncertainty. Supporters pointed to rising valuations and pressure on homeowners, particularly those on fixed incomes. The House added a senior-focused provision, addressing those concerns while raising questions about implementation and potential cost shifts.

Opponents cited the lack of definition for “qualifying seniors” and the risk of shifting the tax burden. Key details will be determined in future legislation.

The measure now moves to the Senate. While its path forward remains uncertain as a standalone proposal, elements are likely to factor into broader negotiations as lawmakers work toward a final agreement.

CLOCK RUNNING ON CHILD CARE FIX AS SESSION NEARS END

With only days left in the legislative session, a widely supported effort to fix Kansas’ child care subsidy system faces an uncertain path forward.

SB 513 targets a problem providers and families have raised for years: a payment system that is difficult to navigate and slow to deliver funds. Testimony before the Senate Ways and Means Committee highlighted the impact. Providers described ongoing administrative burdens, delayed payments, and resulting cash flow challenges that can limit their ability to serve families. Notably, 71% of providers said they would be more likely to utilize the subsidy program if payments were made directly to them.

The bill responds with a targeted structural change. It directs the Kansas Department for Children and Families, in coordination with the Kansas Office of Early Childhood, to modernize the system and move to direct-to-provider payments. Lawmakers framed the approach as a step toward more reliable payments, reduced administrative friction, and a more sustainable child care system.

The Senate advanced the bill with near-unanimous support, passing it 39-1. That margin reflects broad agreement on both the problem and the proposed solution.

The challenge now is timing. With adjournment approaching, the House has limited runway to act.

Whether SB 513 advances this year remains uncertain — but the need to address the system’s shortcomings is clear and growing.

UPCOMING WEEK: MARCH 23–27, 2026

The Kansas Legislature passed a significant milestone last week. The last day to debate bills on the calendar occurred on Friday, March 20, the 68th day of the 2026 session.

FOULSTON

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Beginning Monday, March 23, the action shifts to conference committees. After two full days of meetings, conference committee reports will be brought to the House and Senate prior to first adjournment. First adjournment of the legislature occurs on Friday, March 27.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The legislature will return Thursday, April 9, for a two- or three-day veto session. The Joint Rules for the 2025-26 legislative biennium restrict what legislation may be brought forward during the veto session. This restriction is found in Rule K of the 2025-26 Joint Rules.

Under Rule K, after first adjournment, only the following may be considered:

- Bills vetoed by the governor
- The omnibus appropriations act
- The omnibus reconciliation spending limit bill

However, the House of Representatives and the Senate may act on any legislation by suspending Rule K with a majority vote.

WHY IT MATTERS

As outlined above, conference committees now drive final decisions. What moves this week will determine what reaches the governor's desk this session.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

HB 2799: Legislature/Giving Testimony Before Legislature. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Rep. Tom Kessler (R-Wichita) and requested by Rep. Stephanie Sawyer Clayton (D-Overland Park), would require all persons giving testimony before all committees of the legislature to take an oath. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Federal and State Affairs.

SB 536: Income Tax/High Performance Tax Credit. This bill, introduced by the Committee on Assessment and Taxation chaired by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), would provide for a rebate instead of a credit for a taxpayer's investment in a qualified business facility and would cap the maximum rebate provided. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Assessment and Taxation.

BILL TRACKING HISTORY

A history of the bills we are tracking as of March 23, 2026, can be found [here](#). Most recent actions are listed first.

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 cawatson@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

FOULSTON

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

C. Edward Watson, II

Editor and Government Affairs & Public Policy Law Team Leader

316.291.9589

cewatson@foulston.com | [View Bio](#)

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.

Susan (Sue) Peterson, PhD

Contributing Author and Government Affairs Consultant

785.341.6717

speterson@foulston.com | [View bio](#)

Sue, a government affairs consultant to Foulston Siefkin's government affairs & public policy practice group, is a strategic advocate, advisor, and connection to the Kansas Legislature, government agencies, and elected officials. She has built a robust and well-established network of state and federal lawmakers, corporate/academic leaders, and policymakers nationwide. She earned a Bachelor of Science in political science from Kansas State University, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Kansas, and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from KSU. Before joining Foulston, Sue served as Kansas State University's chief government relations officer for 34 years; her experience also includes staff positions in Kansas' executive and legislative branches.

Eric L. Sexton, PhD

Contributing Author and Government Affairs Consultant

316.371.7553

esexton@foulston.com | [View bio](#)

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

This update has been prepared by Foulston Siefkin LLP for informational purposes only. It is not a legal opinion; it does not provide legal advice for any purpose; and it neither creates nor constitutes evidence of an attorney-client relationship.