



## KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | MARCH 9, 2026

### SENATE PASSES AMENDED SCHOOL CELLPHONE BILL

Efforts to address student cellphone use during the school day continue to move through the Kansas Legislature as House Bill 2299 advances toward the final stages of the legislative process.

The Kansas Senate passed an amended version of the bill Thursday on a 32-4 vote. Sen. Dinah Sykes (D-Lenexa) and Senate Majority Leader Chase Blasi (R-Wichita) were among lawmakers who supported the legislation as a step toward reducing classroom distractions and addressing student mental health concerns.

The measure has drawn bipartisan attention as lawmakers respond to concerns from educators and parents about classroom distractions and the broader effects of constant device use on student learning and well-being. The bill would require Kansas school districts and nonpublic schools accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education to adopt policies restricting student use of personal electronic communication devices during the school day. These devices include cellphones, tablets, watches, and other wireless tools capable of voice, text, or video communication. Devices would generally need to be turned off and stored away while school is in session. Limited exceptions would remain for medical needs or accommodations required under individualized education programs or Section 504 plans.

The Kansas House previously passed the bill Feb. 17 on a bipartisan 75-48 vote. Debate was intense when the proposal reached the House floor, particularly over whether the requirement should apply only to public schools or also extend to accredited private schools. Some legislators argued that if cellphone use disrupted learning, the policy should apply to all accredited schools. Others raised concerns about state involvement in policies governing private institutions and locally elected school boards. Despite those disagreements, the House approved the bill with bipartisan support and sent it to the Senate.

Senators refined several provisions, including clarifying that the policy applies to nonpublic schools accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education and adjusting language governing how those schools are covered under the bill.

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Because the Senate approved the bill with changes, the measure now returns to the House. Legislative leaders are expected to appoint a conference committee to reconcile the two versions before the bill can move toward final passage.

## CLOSE VOTE SETS SENATE BUDGET POSITION

The Kansas Senate set its budget position this week, advancing Sub. for SB 315 after extended floor debate over spending priorities, fiscal sustainability, and a series of amendments offered during consideration of the bill.

The measure passed on a 21-19 vote, establishing the Senate's position as it moves toward negotiations with the House on the final state budget.

For FY 2026, the Senate recommends \$27.8 billion in total spending, including \$10.9 billion from the State General Fund. For FY 2027, the proposal totals about \$26.8 billion, including approximately \$10.8 billion from the State General Fund.

As in the House proposal, two areas dominate State General Fund spending. Education accounts for more than half of general fund expenditures, while human services represents one-third of the budget. Together, those two categories continue to drive the majority of state spending.

Floor debate stretched across multiple hours and included more than a dozen proposed amendments addressing spending priorities and policy provisions tied to education and state programs. Most of those proposals failed on the floor, while only a limited number were incorporated into the Senate version of the bill.

One of the closest votes added language directing the Kansas State Department of Education to establish a complaint process and potential penalties for school districts that do not enforce attendance policies during organized student walkouts. The provision requires districts that allow walkouts without written parental consent to face financial penalties tied to a superintendent's daily salary and provides that a day on which such a walkout occurs may not count as an instructional school day.

Other amendments targeted specific funding priorities within the budget. One proposal redirected funding from the State Arts Commission and public broadcasting grants to support a transportation initiative intended to improve employment access for Kansans with disabilities.

The Senate plan also includes several programmatic funding decisions. The bill increases funding for human services programs, including higher Medicaid payments for nursing facilities and increased reimbursement rates for providers serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additional investments support behavioral health services, community and technical colleges, and special education aid.

Despite those adjustments, debate reflected broader concerns about the state's long-term fiscal outlook and the sustainability of future spending levels if revenues do not keep pace with projected expenditures.

With Senate action complete, the bill now moves to negotiations with the House. A conference committee is expected to begin work later this week to reconcile differences between the two chambers before a final budget package is sent to Gov. Laura Kelly.

## UPCOMING WEEK: MARCH 9-13, 2026

### Monday, March 6

- House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee
  - Informational hearing on HB 2649: Establishing the Kansas Empowerment Savings Program, authorizing certain employees to contribute to individual retirement accounts through an automatic payroll deduction

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and providing powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of the Kansas Empowerment Savings Program board of trustees within the state treasurer's office concerning such program.

- Informational briefing: Paid Family Leave Act.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 521: Providing for credits for payment of employee's child care and contributions to a third party for increased child care options.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
  - Hearing on SB 524: Requiring banks to enter into a written agreement with the state treasurer to be a depository of public moneys, increasing the market value of securities necessary to secure the deposit of public moneys, providing procedures for when a depository fails to follow the requirements of the state treasurer, modifying certain definitions, authorizing the state treasurer to assess a fee to operate the public moneys pooled method, creating the Public Moneys Fee Fund and providing exceptions to the public moneys pooled method if accounts are subject to conflicting federal law.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2614: Allowing certain exceptions to the confidentiality of records and information given to the Crime Victims Compensation Board.
  - Hearing on HB 2460: Providing an exception to the Kansas Open Records Act that authorizes members of the legislature to have identifying information restricted from public access on public websites that identify home addresses or home ownership.
  - Hearing on HB 2519: Continuing in existence certain exceptions to the disclosure of public records under the Kansas Open Records Act.
- Senate Commerce Committee
  - Hearing on Sub HB 2346: Establishing the Kansas Sports Tourism Grant program administered by the secretary of commerce to provide matching grants to communities for developing and continuing sporting events, providing for funding of such grants from the State Economic Development Initiatives fund or from the State General Fund if funds are not available therefrom.
  - Hearing on HB 2466: Extending the sunset for the angel investor tax credit to 2031.
- House Health and Human Services Committee
  - Hearing on SB 322: Removing the authority of the State Board of Pharmacy to authorize individuals to access the prescription monitoring program database by rules and regulations.
- House Judiciary Committee
  - Informational hearing: Authorizing the governor to make a declaration of need for enhanced security for an extraordinary event and providing certain powers to the governor during a period of such declaration (2026 SB 523).
- House Insurance Committee
  - Informational hearing on HB 2684: Providing price limits and other requirements for health benefits covering prescription insulin drugs and establishing the Insulin Affordability program for the uninsured.
  - Hearing on SB 422: Reorganizing certain provisions that apply to foreign insurance companies seeking authorization to do business in Kansas, authorizing the suspension or revocation of a nonresident agent's license without notice and opportunity for a hearing following notification to the commissioner of insurance that such nonresident agent no longer holds a home state license and requiring agents and public adjusters to respond to inquiries from the commissioner.

## Tuesday, March 10

- Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2476: Permitting federal pesticide warning or labeling requirements to satisfy any state pesticide warning or labeling requirements.

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- Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2702: Providing that applicants for a physician assistant license submit to a criminal record check, providing for the collaboration between physicians and physician assistants, and requiring the revocation of a physician assistant license under certain circumstances.
- House Water Committee
  - Hearing on SB 317: Providing additional requirements for applications to the Water Technical Assistance Fund and the Water Projects Grant Fund, including the requirement that applicants demonstrate the availability of a 25-year water supply, prohibiting grants for issues related to water rights that are impaired by another water right, prioritizing applications based on various criteria, and mandating annual submissions on Sept. 15.
- Senate Transportation Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2647: Authorizing the Kansas Department of Transportation to establish a statewide conduit system for fiber optic transmissions of broadband connections.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 488: Enacting the Kansas Property Tax Freedom Act of 2026, providing for the phased elimination of property taxation and for revenue replacement grants to taxing subdivisions, establishing the Kansas Fair Share Purchase Surcharge and providing such revenue to taxing subdivisions, the State General Fund, and the new Property Tax Freedom Reserve Fund, and providing for freedom dividend rebates.
  - Hearing on SCR 1621: Proposing to amend Section 1 of Article 11 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas to prohibit the levy of any property tax by the state or any political or taxing subdivision of the state.
  - Hearing on HB 2470: Providing that certain municipalities may designate the entire municipality within a neighborhood revitalization area under the Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act.
  - Hearing on SB 148: Excluding from sales taxation the service of installing or applying tangible personal property for the reconstruction, restoration, remodeling, renovation, repair or replacement of a building or facility.
- Senate Government Efficiency Committee
  - Hearing on SCR 1620: Recognizing the seriousness of the national debt and the threat to national security that such debt poses.
  - Hearing on HB 2573: Amending statutes concerning the Kansas Board of Accountancy; relating to licensure requirements for certified public accountants.
- Senate Local Government, Transparency and Ethics Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2571: Requiring cost-sharing agreements between municipalities for the maintenance of shared road.
- Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
  - Hearing on SB 520: Creating the crime of interference with the conduct of a religious assembly, providing criminal penalties therefor, and providing for a civil cause of action for damages.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on Sub HB 2595: Enacting the Attorney Training Program for Rural Kansas Act, providing stipends to law students who meet certain requirements and agree to practice law in rural areas and providing loan forgiveness to lawyers who meet certain requirements and practice law in rural areas.
  - Hearing on HB 2323: Establishing procedures for a civil action instituted by the commissioner of insurance related to fraudulent insurance acts, providing that expunged criminal records will be disclosed in any application for licensure as an insurance producer or public adjuster if the arrest, conviction or diversion is for fraudulent insurance acts and including automobile assigned claims plans in provisions related to fraudulent insurance acts.

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- Joint Meeting
- Senate Commerce/House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committees
  - Hearing on HB 2793: Enacting the Kansas Sports Authority Act to 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.
- House Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on SB 426: Enacting the Kansas Transparency in Consumer Legal Funding Act.
  - Hearing on SB 463: Prohibiting certain persons from recovering damages in certain civil actions and creating requirements for actions involving negligent security.
- House Taxation Committee
  - Informational briefing: Streamlined Sales Tax and variance in local sales tax rates. Diane Yetter, Sales Tax Institute, and Craig Johnson, Streamlined Sales Tax.

## Wednesday, March 11

- Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
  - Hearing on SB 519: Exempting certain registered agritourism operations from local code and regulation enforcement.
- Senate Transportation Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2467: Prohibiting past convictions or sanctions for failure to comply with a traffic citation that is more than five years old from being considered by courts and the division of vehicles in determining suspended or restricted driving privileges and eliminating certain notice requirements for the division of vehicles.
- House Appropriations Committee
  - Informational hearing: 2026 World Cup.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 489: Providing for a universal homestead exemption from ad valorem property taxation.
  - Hearing on SB 209: Providing a sales tax exemption for sales of firearms, firearm accessories, ammunition, firearm safes, and firearm safety devices.
  - Hearing on: Concurrent resolution on exempting seniors from school property taxes.
- Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2591: Authorizing financial institutions to report suspected financial exploitation of an adult account holder to a designated agency, notify any adult designated as a trusted contact by such account holder of suspected financial exploitation, and place a temporary hold on certain transactions or disbursements.
- Senate Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2518: Increasing the criminal penalties for certain violations of the crime of breach of privacy and modifying the culpable mental state required to commit such crime.
  - Hearing on HB 2594: Modifying the elements of the crime of blackmail related to threatened dissemination of any videotape, photograph, film, or image of another identifiable person who is nude or engaged in sexual activity by removing the connection to breach of privacy and describing the content of the videotape, photograph, film, or image.
- Senate Commerce Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2504: Prohibiting cities and counties from restricting the discretion of landlords not to rent residential or commercial property on grounds including prospective tenants' receipt of housing assistance or eviction or criminal history and permitting cities and counties to prohibit discrimination by

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landlords on the basis of receipt of veterans benefits.

- Senate Utilities Committee
  - Presentation on: The transportation of a high burn-up research cask.
  - Electricity rate challenges.
- House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
  - Hearing on SB 390: Prohibiting certain additives in food provided by schools as part of certain food service programs and requiring schools to certify that school facilities do not serve food that contains such food additives.
  - Hearing on SB 407: Authorizing the adoption of certain rules and regulations related to hazardous waste monitoring and permit application fees by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
- House Judiciary Committee
  - Hearing on SB 413: Prohibiting counsel from suggesting an amount of damages for noneconomic loss in civil actions.
- House Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on HCR 5034: Proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Kansas by revising Article 11 by establishing the Freedom From Taxes Fund, establishing the Kansas Citizens Freedom Review Board, authorizing the board to review tax exemptions and approve or eliminate such exemptions and eliminating the motor vehicle property taxes and fees, state-mandated and state-imposed property taxes, and state-imposed income and privilege taxes.
- House Insurance Committee
  - Hearing on SB 360: Enacting the Kansas Consumer Prescription Protection and Accountability Act and providing for regulation and registration of pharmacy benefits managers.

## Thursday, March 12

- Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2462: Requiring the secretary of health and environment to adopt rules and regulations that allow for the direct and indirect potable reuse of treated wastewater.
- Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
  - Hearing on HB 2528: Requiring all State Board of Nursing actions related to nonpractice violations be void, allowing for late license renewal for professional, practical and advanced practice registered nurses, setting fees for late license renewal, limiting unprofessional conduct to acts related to the practice of nursing, prohibiting the board from taking retaliatory action against a licensee based on certain lawful actions and creating a civil cause of action for violation thereof, requiring that board members be subject to Senate confirmation and requiring the board to issue refunds for overpayment or duplicate payment.
- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on: Wind turbine and solar industrial tax proposal.
- Senate Select Committee on Veterans Affairs
  - Hearing on HB 2627: Expanding permissive preference in private employment to include current servicemembers and eligible spouses.
- House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
  - Commerce Conversations: Aviation – Bombardier.

## Friday, March 13

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- Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
  - Hearing on SB 268: Clarifying modifications for certain business interest expenses and federal net operating loss carrybacks and providing a technical change to a statutory cross reference for recaptured moneys related to adoption savings accounts for purposes of Kansas income tax.
  - Hearing on SB 296: Eliminating certain tax credits, exemptions, incentives, refunds, and limitations, a transitional adjustment, a checkoff, and a restoration program administered by the secretary that have expired or are no longer applicable.
- Senate Commerce Committee
  - Hearing on Sub HB 2357: Providing for expungement of certain court records and consideration of mediation in eviction actions in which the underlying rental agreement is governed by the Residential Landlord and Tenant Act.

## BILL INTRODUCTIONS

### SENATE BILLS

#### Commerce

**SB 526: Data Centers/Sales Tax Exemption.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Assessment and Taxation chaired by Sen. Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), would require any qualified data center to be located on land that was zoned and classified for industrial or manufacturing uses on July 1, 2025, if such land was subject to zoning regulations by a local zoning authority on or before such date. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Commerce chaired by Sen. Larry Alley (R-Winfield).

#### Insurance

**SB 528: Municipal Self-Funded Health and Prescription Drug Insurance Pool Act/Group-Funded Pools.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs chaired by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee), would establish certain reserve, maximum exposure funding, and reporting requirements for municipal self-funded medical and prescription drug insurance pools. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance chaired by Sen. Brenda Dietrich (R-Topeka) and will be heard Thursday, March 12, at 9:30 a.m.

#### Public Health and Welfare

**SB 522: Health and Healthcare/Medical Mandates.** This bill, introduced by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs, chaired by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee), would enact the Medical Freedom Act, which would prohibit the denial of an individual's access to certain services based on such individual's medical choices. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Public Health and Welfare chaired by Sen. Beverly Gossage (R-Wichita) and will be heard on Friday, March 13, at 8:30 a.m.

## BILL TRACKING HISTORY

A history of the bills we are tracking as of March 9, 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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