

NEWSLETTERS



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 6, 2023

INTERIM UPDATE

Since adjournment, legislators have devoted their time to interim committees and pondering their political plans. Several House members have already announced their intention to seek Senate seats. Others are filing for re-election and fundraising for the 2024 election. Interim studies have addressed a wide spectrum of subjects.

Two interesting September interims revolved around elections and foreign ownership of Kansas land. The Special Committee on Elections reviewed a Legislative Post Audit report noted that not all counties have written policies for election procedures. There was controversy regarding allowing the Liberty Lions League to testify about the safety risks associated with voting machines. They advocate for paper ballots and hand counting.

The Special Committee on Foreign Adversary Investments and Land Purchases heard testimony from Attorney General Kris Kobach proposing a ban on sales of more than 10 acres to foreign individuals and corporations. The Attorney General also proposed a lease limit of two years where an adversarial nation was involved. The proposal was received coolly by the committee. The committee did not make any recommendations. Only 2.4% of Kansas land is owned or leased by foreign interests.

Last week, the legislative budget committee received an update on the first year of sports gaming in Kansas. Sports gaming started last September and Lottery officials testified sports gaming generated \$7 million in Kansas revenue. More than \$1.8 billion was wagered during the past year.

The October scheduled interims include child welfare, corrections/juvenile justice, education, governmental ethics reform, information technology, and taxation.

LEGISLATIVE COMPENSATION COMMISSION

Last session, the Legislature authorized a Legislative Compensation Commission to address the issue of low legislative pay and authorized the development of a proposal to be either accepted or rejected by the 2024 Legislature. The Commission appointees are former legislators and public officials. The Commission met twice in September. Kansas legislative compensation ranks near the bottom among part-time legislatures. There was

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consensus that legislative pay should be increased. Based on a typical legislative session (92 days), the annual compensation would be around \$23,429, plus additional pay for leadership positions. Legislators receive a day's allowance of \$166 to cover their expenses.

A 2019 Kansas Legislative Post-Audit survey indicated that of the four neighboring states with part-time legislatures, Kansas was ranked third in legislator pay. Oklahoma legislative pay was \$50,800, with Missouri at \$48,800 and Colorado at \$43,500. Nebraska legislators were paid less than those in Kansas, at \$21,000.

At the Sept. 21 meeting, the Commission agreed to initially recommend a \$45,000 salary for legislators, with additional compensation for leadership positions. There was discussion on which committee chairs should receive additional compensation. The Commission is scheduled to meet twice in October. On October 5, the commission agreed that legislative compensation should be \$42,000. The details are now close to being finalized. The Commission's recommendations are due by Dec. 1.

FIRST QUARTER REVENUE REPORT CARD

After the first quarter, Fiscal Year 2024 revenue receipts are running close to the April revised consensus estimates. July receipts were \$14.2 million, or 2.5% above the estimates. August revenue receipts dipped below the estimates. August receipts were \$22.1 million, or 1.8% under the estimates. September receipts rebounded, with \$42 million more than the estimates. After the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, revenue is \$31 million above the estimates. How large is the Kansas budget surplus? It is estimated to be \$2.7 billion for the current fiscal year. This is in addition to the \$1.7 billion in the rainy-day fund. Tax cuts will be among the legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

RESIGNATION

September ended with the announcement that Rep. Fred Patton, R-Topeka, will resign on Oct. 16 from the Kansas House of Representatives. Rep. Patton cited a desire to devote more time to family, civic activities, and his law practice. He serves as chair of the House Judiciary Committee and the House Rules and Journal Committee. He has served House District 50 since 2015. House Speaker Dan Hawkins has appointed Rep. Susan Humphries, R-Wichita, as the new Judiciary Committee Chair.

Kansas Legislative Insights is a publication developed by the Governmental Affairs & Public Policy Law practice group of Foulston Siefkin LLP. It is designed to inform business executives, human resources and governmental relations professionals, and general counsel about current developments occurring in current Kansas legislation. Published regularly during the Kansas legislative session, it focuses on issues involving healthcare, insurance, public finance, taxation, financial institutions, business & economic development, energy, real estate & construction, environmental, Agribusiness, employment, and workers compensation. Bill summaries are by necessity brief, however, for additional information on any issue before the Kansas Legislature, contact Foulston Siefkin's Governmental Affairs & Public Policy Law practice group leader, James P. Rankin at 785.233.3600 or jrankin@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

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