



HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS



2023 Legislature Week 12

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The Kansas Senate Has Approved Vaccine Exemption legislation by relaxing the religious requirements necessary to attain one. However, opponents say establishing this access to exclusion is that it may impact childcare facilities, elder care facilities, schools, and employers by forcing them to modify their health and safety protocols to permit unvaccinated personnel to remain on the job. The bill did not pass with enough votes to override any potential veto from Governor Kelly as 7 Republicans joined all 11 Democrats in opposing it and now the bill has to pass the Kansas House where it faces challenges to become law there too.

The House And Senate Passed Bipartisan Legislation making it illegal to sell any tobacco products to persons under the age of 21. This bill would also prohibit the use of tobacco products by anyone under 21y/o including electronic cigarettes. The legislature was incentivized to pass promptly to forgo losing \$1.2 million in Federal funding for not having the law already in place. Governor Kelly now has the bill on her desk awaiting her signature.

The Kansas House Has Modified The Snap Regulations to extend the age limit to 59 years old for the mandatory 30-hour work or job training requirement for those without dependents. Those in favor of the requirement assert that withholding the food will help people become financially self-sufficient. Those in opposition assert this move will drive more people to a place of economic instability and insecurity. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

The Kansas Senate Considers Bill To Limit Train Lengths to 8,500 feet, or 1.5 miles, as they travel through the state. The bill would also require parked trains to be no less than 250 feet away from any crossing. Rail companies found to ignore these state mandates could be fined up to \$100K for extreme carelessness. However, these concerns are currently under the sole regulatory discretion of the Federal Surface Transportation Board. Opponents say Kansas has no authority to enact such a bill or even the authority to address these issues directly.

The Federal Early & Periodic Screening, Diagnostic & Treatment Law has become a bureaucratic failure to communicate on every level here in Kansas. This law is meant to assure children would receive medical care, medications, and adaptive apparatus' along with social, mental, and medical support throughout their care plans. Sadly that is not what is happening here which is why the KDHE believes additional education focused specifically on how state lawmakers can cut through the maze of insurance red tape to implement this Federal law to improve healthcare outcomes overall. KDHE is also advocating that lawmakers should be in charge of any changes to rates or processes covered by this law.

The Sunflower Education Equity Act is Now Being Heard In The House, and bundled the creation of a school choice education savings account with funding for special education and teacher raises. Public school advocates condemned the bill while the Act's proponents called public K-12 "a monopoly". These accounts could be used for private school tuition or private tutoring; they were supported by a vote of 64-61. Partisan opposition worries about the cost-benefit of putting public funds into private schools.

Gun Safety Curriculum Legislation now goes to Governor Kelly for review. The bill would put the NRA's

gun safety curriculum into Kansas schools. If she signs HB 2304, the Kansas BOE will set parameters for safety instruction, specifically to include understanding what to do when a student encounters a gun.

To Ease Constituent Access to Conceal Carry Licenses in Kansas, the House of Representatives has passed a bill to amend the Personal and Family Protection Act. This would remove all but two fees from the processes, saving consumers over \$100 in fees. The costs that would remain would be a charge to the residential county, and the cost of fingerprinting. By dropping fees for applications, renewals, and late charges, this action would cost \$1.2 million in predicted income over the 20,000 licenses Kansas issues annually.

A Record-Breaking 500 People are attending the 17th annual governors' public health conference in Manhattan to enjoy networking and professional development centered around four keynote presentations and 30 breakout sessions. KDHE focused on a wide range of topics and diversity among the speakers. Activities include idea sharing and technical training, plus speakers on health equity in schools and the Flint, Michigan water crisis.

Tax Break After years of lobbying that for-profit businesses shouldn't have to compete with non-profits offering similar services, like the YMCA, but receiving tax exemptions, the Senate has passed tax breaks for childcare, restaurants, and health centers. Last year, the Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit released a report that the competition is minimal. No businesses testified on behalf of the bill, while many officials from local governments voiced opposition.

Why are Attorneys Leaving the AG's Office? That is the question facing the department and the Kansas legislature. Since the 2022 election, 20 attorneys have departed, seven in natural turnover, but 13 have left to go work for local agencies. Attorney General Kris Kobach has explained that the short staff has led to significant delays in case management. Kobach believes this calls for budget and salary increases for his department.

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