



# HOUSING HIGHLIGHTS

2026 Legislature Week Eleven  
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## **Attorney Training for Rural Kansas Act**

Kansas lawmakers passed **HB 2595** to address the state's rural attorney shortage. The law provides stipends of up to \$3,000 per year to Washburn University and University of Kansas law students who commit to practicing in rural areas, and up to \$100,000 in student loan repayment over five years for practicing rural attorneys. Oversight is handled by the Kansas Department of Commerce, and the bill passed the House 119-3 and Senate 34-6, potentially taking effect this fall. The bill has been presented to the Governor for review and potential action.

## **Bill Eliminating Public Benefits for Undocumented Immigrants**

**SB 254** reduces state-level benefits for undocumented immigrants, including in-state tuition for certain high school graduates. Supporters, including Attorney General Kris Kobach, say it aligns state policy with federal law, while critics warn it could limit educational opportunities. The bill passed the House 78-46 and the Senate 22-18, falling short of the two-thirds needed to override an expected veto from Governor Laura Kelly. The bill has been presented to the Governor for review and potential action.

## **Cities and Counties Contract Bid Changes**

The Legislature approved **HB 2571**, raising the threshold for mandatory public bidding on county infrastructure and construction contracts from \$25,000 to \$100,000. The update, the first since 2008, allows local officials more flexibility for mid-sized projects while maintaining existing worker protections. The bill passed the House 122-0 and Senate 36-3. The bill has been presented to the Governor for review and potential action.

## **Expanding Rural Apprenticeships**

Lieutenant Governor David Toland announced **\$500,000 in RAISE grants** to expand registered apprenticeship programs in rural Kansas. Educational institutions can apply for up to \$100,000 to teach engineering skills and access additional support, with projects requiring a three-month development timeline. Applications are open until April 17th.

## **Water Appropriations and Transfers**

Governor Kelly signed **HB 2433** into law, clarifying the state's authority over water appropriations and transfers. The law prevents local zoning codes or county rules from overriding state water management policies, responding to disputes with the City of Hays. Passed House 116-6; Senate 36-3; signed by the Governor on March 20.

### **New Construction Contract Policy**

Governor Kelly signed **SB 335**, amending the Kansas Fairness in Public Construction Contract Act to require all public construction contracts to include a mutual waiver of consequential damages, reducing unpredictable costs in state-funded projects. Passed House 84-34; Senate 37-2; signed by the Governor on March 12.

### **Online Child Protection**

**SB 372**, the proposed App Store Accountability Act, is advancing in the Legislature to require age verification and regulate data collection from minors. Proponents cite child protection, while critics raise privacy concerns.

### **Parole Board Overhaul**

**SB 459** which will offer major changes to the Kansas Prisoner Review Board, including shifting appointment authority to the Governor and Attorney General, expanding the board to five members, and requiring unanimous votes for parole of violent offenders. The bill passed the House 124-0 and the Senate 32-7 and is now on its way to the Governor for consideration.

### **Respect & Solace for Families of Fallen Officers**

Governor Kelly signed **SB 445**, allowing the Kansas Highway Patrol and Kansas Bureau of Investigation to provide logistical and staffing support for law enforcement funerals, ensuring assistance for local agencies and bereaved families. Passed House 123-0; Senate 40-0; signed by the Governor on March 20.

### **Transportation Technology Funding**

Governor Kelly announced **\$3.9 million for the Innovative Technology Program** under the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program. Projects include AI security monitoring for transit, smart signal upgrades, advanced air mobility at Kansas State University-Salina, intelligent intersection management, emergency vehicle preemption along I-70, and rural healthcare drone delivery, with total investment exceeding \$8.1 million including local matches.

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