



The final days of the 2026 Legislative session were fast paced as we dealt with dozens of bills and conference committee reports. On the final two days, the Veto Session, we had numerous votes to override vetoes made by the Governor. I am reporting on some of the bills that would have some local significance here. I spent a lot of time and energy working on Property Tax Issues this year. We have had several iterations of possible ways to legislate any beneficial change in your property tax bills.

However, we fell short. In the waning hours of the dark night the Tax Conference Committee found a way to put the contents of HB2745 back into a bill that did not pass (we call those shells) and renumbered it to be HB2043, because the Governor vetoed it and the legislature did not override her veto – so “lets just try it again and see what happens!” seemed to be the strategy. Now the bill is back on the Governor’s desk awaiting her decision – again.

The bill would (1) continue the “Revenue Neutral” we passed about 2-3 years ago (2) provide for a public protest petition requiring 10% of the number of persons that voted in the taxing entity in the last election of a Secretary of State if the entity increases the budget by over 3% (3) has no hard cap on growth and there is no automatic public vote.

The bill may not be decided before I send this email, but other media will get the word out to you. The best way to reduce property taxes is to keep the budget low. And the way citizens can do that is to attend the budget hearings and let your elected local officials hear from you. We really do listen. The legislature was – fortunately – unable to pass a Constitutional Amendment for property tax change. We will continue this task in the coming session beginning in January 2027.

Education took big hits again at all levels. While I think we needed a cell phone policy during school hours, I did not support the legislature’s ban on it because it did not Grandfather in those 22 districts (Including USD 383) that had already established local school policies. USD 383 will now have to amend its policy to comply. We interfered with

school recess, whether students could participate in political protests, active violence drills, where the students could use the restroom, and reduced mental health funds for schools. I voted NO on all of these changes.

This August 4 you will have the opportunity to vote on a Constitutional Amendment for. The question being, will we support electing the Kansas Supreme Court Justices? Will we vote to politicize our courts? Or continue the bi-partisan process of selection based on merit as we have done since the days of Fred Hall. I voted No. You will have your vote in August.

I am anxious to get the full report from the staff when all our successful legislation will be compiled into our 2026 Summary of Legislation. At this time, however, I am relying on my very hastily taken notes while on the floor voting as fast as we could. Literally, you can check it all out on U Tube. I will be seeing you in Manhattan at local events and at your doorsteps until we go back in January 2027.

SOME OF OUR RECENT WORK

I VOTED YES on the following:

HB 2653

I voted in favor of Kansas House Bill 2653, a reentry-focused criminal justice measure that requires the Kansas Department of Corrections to help incarcerated individuals obtain essential documents, such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, and state IDs, before release. It also ensures they leave with records of their work history, education, and a resume reflecting skills gained while incarcerated, making the transition back into society more practical and immediate. It addresses one of the biggest barriers to successful reentry—lack of identification and employment readiness—helping individuals reintegrate more effectively into the workforce and the communities. By removing these obstacles, HB 2653 helps reduce repeat offenses, improves public safety, and supports the workforce by enabling individuals to secure jobs more quickly. With little or no fiscal impact on the state, it represents a cost-effective policy that benefits both individuals and communities across Kansas.

Sub HB 2595

I voted in favor of Substitute for House Bill 2595, which creates the Attorney Training Program for Rural Kansas Act. The law provides financial incentives, such as stipends for law students and student loan repayment for attorneys, if they commit to living and practicing law in rural Kansas communities. Its goal is to address a growing shortage of attorneys in rural areas by encouraging new legal professionals to work outside major

urban counties. Many rural communities lack sufficient access to legal services and making expanded access to attorneys is critical for ensuring fairness and supporting local economies. This will improve criminal defense, family law and business needs. It's a targeted, workforce-focused solution that addresses a critical gap in the state's legal system while investing in long-term community stability.

SB 20

I voted in favor of Senate Bill 20, known as the PBM (Pharmacy Benefit Managers) reform bill. PBMs contract, regulate, and negotiate with pharmacies the prescription drug price between drug manufacturers, pharmacies, and insurance companies. The law, called the Kansas Consumer Prescription Protection and Accountability Act, adds oversight by the state, requires drug rebates to be passed through to health plans, ensures pharmacies are reimbursed fairly, and bans "spread pricing." PBMs have previously made huge profits by charging insurers more than they paid the pharmacies, driving up prescription drug costs and driving small and rural pharmacies out of business.

This is the second bill in cleaning up the PBM business in Kansas. Several years ago, I brought forward and passed legislation that stopped PBM's from enforcing their "gag rule" on pharmacists and allowed them to once again have open communication with clients about drug costs without threat of losing their contracts with the PBMs. This is not enough; there are more ways we in the legislature can help reduce drug costs in the future.

SB 271

I voted in favor of Senate Bill 271, which updates income eligibility requirements for Kansas' Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), ensuring that qualification levels reflect current economic conditions rather than outdated standards. The bill requires legislative review of Medicaid and related services. It expands and stabilizes access to affordable healthcare for children for working families who earn too much under outdated guidelines but still struggle to afford private insurance. Modernizing eligibility and maintaining oversight will improve health coverage continuity, reduces uninsured rates among children, and strengthens overall public health across Kansas.

HB 2571

I voted in favor of House Bill 2571, which requires cost-sharing agreements between municipalities for the maintenance of shared roads. In simple terms, when two or more local governments (like cities or counties) share responsibility for a road, the bill ensures they formally agree on how costs for upkeep, repairs, and maintenance are divided. This measure helps prevent disputes and uneven financial burdens between

neighboring communities by creating clearer expectations and accountability. The standardization of how shared infrastructure is funded and maintained supports better road conditions, more efficient use of local tax dollars, and improved coordination between jurisdictions—ultimately benefiting residents who rely on safe and well-maintained roads for daily travel and commerce.

SB 358

Working with local members of our community, prosecutors and state revisers I brought SB 358 to the legislature. I was pleased to have the full support of Senator Kenny Titus, vice chair of Senate Judiciary Committee, to work with me to arrange hearings in both the House and Senate committees. And, I had the full support of every member of our Riley County delegation in the Kansas Legislature. The bill requires the court to revoke bond of defendants immediately upon conviction of certain serious felonies and remand them to jail while awaiting sentencing. Under prior law, the judge had the discretion to allow some convicted individuals to remain free on bond until sentencing. The bill was in response to growing concerns about public safety for victims and communities. Lawmakers testified that victims often experienced fear and uncertainty during this period.

I VOTED NO on the following:

SB 391

I voted against Senate Bill 391, which prohibits cities and counties in Kansas from passing local laws that require landlords to accept tenants using housing assistance programs like Section 8 vouchers. It also prevents local governments from limiting a landlord's ability to consider a tenant's source of income when deciding whether to rent to them. This legislation negatively impacts Kansans by reducing access to affordable housing, particularly for low-income families, veterans, and seniors who rely on rental assistance. Blocking cities from adopting tenant protections, such as those previously enacted in Lawrence, limits local control and makes it easier for landlords to refuse voucher holders, which can increase housing instability and homelessness. Governor Laura Kelly vetoed the bill, warning it would "make it harder for Kansas renters to find an affordable place to live" and strip local communities of the ability to address their own housing challenges.

HB 2727 and HB 2729

I voted against House Bills 2727 and 2729, two closely related abortion policy bills that amend Kansas' Woman's Right-to-Know Act. HB 2727 allows individuals to more easily sue abortion providers by bypassing the state's medical malpractice review process if

they agree to limit damages. HB 2729 requires the state (through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment) to create and mandate standardized consent materials given to patients seeking an abortion. These bills are directly connected; they both expand state involvement in abortion care by increasing legal exposure for providers and controlling the information given to patients. This legislation can cause serious negative health risks for Kansans by discouraging providers from offering care due to increased litigation risk and by requiring the distribution of potentially misleading or medically disputed information, including claims that have been challenged in court. Together, the policies can reduce access to reproductive healthcare and conflict with the 2022 statewide vote where Kansans rejected efforts to further restrict abortion access. Governor Kelly vetoed both bills, and the vetoes were overridden. These laws are now in effect.

HB 2372

I voted against House Bill 2372 (often called the Halo Act), a wide-ranging law that expands cooperation between Kansas law enforcement and federal immigration authorities and creates a new “buffer zone” that makes it a crime to come within 25 feet of a first responder after being warned to stay back. The bill allows county sheriffs to hold individuals in jail based on federal immigration detainers, enables agreements with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) without local oversight, and requires the state to provide legal and financial protection for law enforcement involved in these actions. The bill raises constitutional concerns and increases the risk of wrongful detention, including holding individuals without traditional criminal charges or probable cause. The added 25-foot restriction has been criticized as overly broad and likely to face legal challenges for infringing on First Amendment rights, particularly for journalists and the public documenting police activity. Expanding detention authority and state liability could expose Kansas taxpayers to costly lawsuits while reducing local oversight and community trust in law enforcement.

HB 2437

I voted against House Bill 2437, dubbed by the author as the “SAVE Kansas Act,” that expands the state’s authority to verify and purge voter registration rolls. The bill requires the Secretary of State to regularly cross-check voter records with federal and state databases (including the SAVE system), restricts which websites can be used to submit voter registration applications, and directs officials to remove individuals deemed ineligible from voter roles.

The bill raises concerns about eligible voters being wrongly removed from voter files creating barriers to voting. It relies on large data-matching systems, new verification rules, increases the risk of errors and limits access to registration tools which

particularly affects seniors, low-income residents, and those who move frequently. And, it reduces transparency by shielding certain voter data from public records requests, making it harder to identify mistakes or hold the system accountable.

Sub HB 2731

I voted against House Bill 2731, a wide-ranging public assistance and welfare reform bill that increases oversight and restrictions on programs like SNAP (food assistance) and Medicaid. The bill requires extensive data-sharing between state agencies to verify eligibility, creates a fraud investigation unit, limits retroactive Medicaid enrollment, eliminates self-attestation for benefits, expands work requirements, raises the age for required work participation and limits exemptions. These changes tighten eligibility and enforcement across multiple assistance programs. The combination of stricter rules and reduced flexibility increases the risk of reduced access to basic needs like food and healthcare, potentially leading to greater financial strain and instability for Kansans.

REMINDER:

All committee hearings and chamber proceedings can be found on the Kansas Legislature's [YouTube](#) page.

All legislation, committee membership, and meeting times can be found on the Kansas Legislature's [Website](#) page.

It is a pleasure to serve as your State Representative. I look forward to hearing from you and continuing to work with you on issues that matter most to our community.

Sydney Carlin
(66th District)