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## This Week's League News



# LEAGUE NEWS



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### 1 | **Legislative Update and Resources**

The second week of the legislative session contained a variety of informational briefings, hearings and plenty of bill introductions. As we move forward into the next week, hearings on issues related to asset forfeiture and abandoned and blighted properties have our attention, as well as a few other items of note. In addition to the articles below on asset forfeiture and abandoned and blighted properties, here are a few items to be aware of for the upcoming week:

- **HB 2040** – On Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the House Committee on Transportation will hold a hearing on HB 2040 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2040/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2040/)) in room 582-N. This bill would permit video cameras on school buses to, in part, record violations when vehicles pass a school bus lawfully stopped to pick up school kids. The League will be opposing HB 2040 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2040/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2040/)) because, as written, the bill would create a number of unfunded mandates upon the city, such as the service of citations, associated costs for storage of video evidence, among others mandates. If you have questions, please contact Larry Baer (<mailto:lbaer@lkm.org>).
- **League Presents Before Senate Committee** – On Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, League Executive Director, Erik Sartorius, will be providing a presentation before the Senate Committee on Ethics, Elections and Local Government on the League and its member cities. If you are in town for Local Government Day that morning, please feel free to swing by and check it out. The informational presentation will occur at 9:30 a.m. in room 159-S.
- **New Web Feature to Track Bill Hearings** – The Kansas Legislature's website has added a new tool to track daily schedules of bill hearings occurring in committee. The new feature also provides the user notice if the committee room is equipped with live streaming audio so that you can listen in to the hearing. Make sure to check it

out here ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/committees/hearings/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/committees/hearings/)) and stay up to date on issues important to your city.

For a full look at the week ahead, download the League's Legislative Activities Calendar ([/resource/resmgr/Legislative\\_Calendar\\_1-23-17.pdf](/resource/resmgr/Legislative_Calendar_1-23-17.pdf))!

## 2 | Hearing Scheduled on Abandoned and Blighted Properties Bill

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On Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee will hold a hearing on SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)), concerning abandoned and blighted properties, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 159-S. The bill would provide cities with an effective and efficient method for dealing with the procedural challenges that they face when dealing with abandoned properties where there are non-responsive owners or other interest holders, ownership is in question or the city is not able to get an owner or interest holder to take responsibility for property maintenance. One of the goals of SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) is to identify and rehabilitate the properties before they become "dangerous structures" and have to be demolished.

The League has been working on the bill's concept for the past five years and SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) is a rework of last year's SB 338 ([http://kslegislature.org/li\\_2016/b2015\\_16/measures/sb338/](http://kslegislature.org/li_2016/b2015_16/measures/sb338/)) with two small changes. Notice will now be given to all adjoining landowners within 200 feet of the subject property and to any neighborhood improvement association(s) that may be involved. In addition, the period of abandonment has been expanded from 12 to 15 months.

As one of the League's action items for the 2017 session and an issue that the League has found to effect both large and small cities alike, the League will be testifying in support of SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)). We ask that you remind your legislators of the importance of SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) in dealing with abandoned properties. When speaking to you legislators, these points can be emphasized:

- SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) provides flexibility to cities when dealing with abandoned housing;
- SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) allows cities to seek authority to rehab abandoned housing; and
- SB 31 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/sb31/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/)) is the result of negotiation and consensus among a multitude of interested parties, including the League, Kansas Association of Counties, the Cities of Topeka, Wichita, Kansas City, and other interested groups.

If you have questions, please contact Larry Baer (<mailto:lbaer@lkm.org>).

## 3 | Hearings Scheduled on Bills Concerning Asset Forfeiture

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The House Judiciary Committee is holding hearings on four different bills that would amend the Kansas standard asset seizure and forfeiture act. On Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:30 p.m. in room 112-N, the committee is holding hearings on HB 2001 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2001/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2001/)), HB 2003 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2003/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2003/)) and HB 2004 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2004/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2004/)). On Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m. in room 112-N, the committee will hold a hearing on HB 2018 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2018/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2018/)).

- HB 2001 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2001/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2001/)) would remove the annual requirement to report the amount deposited into the city or county's special law enforcement trust fund to the governing body in charge of the law enforcement agency. The League will testify with a neutral position on HB 2001 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2001/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2001/)).
- HB 2003 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2003/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2003/)) would prevent a county attorney who is also in private practice from doing forfeitures as a private attorney for the county they serve. The League will be monitoring this bill.

- HB 2004 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2004/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2004/)) amends how the proceeds from forfeiture actions can be spent by law enforcement agencies. This change would define normal operating expenses which are prohibited from being paid from the special law enforcement trust fund to include "salaries, benefits or salary enhancements for permanent employees." Notably, the League will be offering testimony in opposition to HB 2004 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2004/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2004/)), but will offer the committee information and suggestions to address the potential concerns with the bill.
- HB 2018 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2018/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2018/)) would require a criminal conviction before any civil forfeiture of assets could be pursued. The League will be testifying in opposition to HB 2018 ([http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017\\_18/measures/hb2018/](http://kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2018/)).

If you have questions, please contact Amanda Stanley (<mailto:astanley@lkm.org>).

## 4 | Last Chance to Register for Local Government Day

Today is the final day to register for Local Government Day, set for next Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. The full schedule of events and the link to register can be found here (<http://www.lkm.org/page/LocalGovernmentDay>). This event is your chance to hear from Senate Vice President Jeff Longbine, Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, Speaker of the House Ron Ryckman, Jr. and House Minority Leader Jim Ward, while networking with other legislators at the evening reception. We hope you have made plans to join us!

## 5 | League Conference Hotel Reservation

This year, the hotel block for the League's annual conference will open June 1<sup>st</sup>, rather than in February. For a full explanation of the change, look for an article that will appear in the upcoming January/February issue of the Kansas Government Journal.

## 6 | Small Cities Resiliency Competition

How are you working to improve your city's resilience to natural disasters or economic stress? Have you been able to assess your risk or identify projects that would reduce it? The Sustainable Cities Institute at the National League of Cities is teaming up with the Institute for Building Technology and Safety (IBTS) to launch a Small Cities Resilience Competition.

Cities of 100,000 or less residents are invited to apply for direct, on-the-ground assistance to improve their resilience through local projects. Deadline to apply is January 31<sup>st</sup>, and you must be a member of NLC; the application consists of four essay questions, maximum 250 words for each question. Click here for more information (<http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/small-cities-resiliency-competition>).

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