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This Week's League News



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1 | **Legislative Update and Resources**

The third week of the legislative session contained a number of informational briefings, bill hearings, and several bill introductions. Looking forward to next week, there are several items we want League members to be aware of and watching.

- **Asset Forfeiture:** The League is actively working to oppose changes to Kansas' current asset forfeiture laws. There are a number of bills in the House Judiciary Committee right now which would change municipalities' current abilities with regard to asset forfeiture and seizure. League staff testified this week in opposition to HB 2018 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/committees/ctte_h_jud_1/) and HB 2116 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/committees/ctte_h_jud_1/). If you have questions about the bills regarding asset forfeiture, please contact

Amanda Stanley. If you are interested, an audio stream (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/committees/ctte_h_jud_1/) is available to listen live to House Judiciary Committee meetings.

- **Abandoned & Blighted Property:** The League continues to support SB 31 which would streamline and expedite the process for local governments, neighborhood organizations and private businesses to deal with the blight of abandoned, nuisance and foreclosed housing. A hearing was held on Thursday, January 26 on this issue; however, due to a large number of conferees, the Senate Election, Ethics and Local Government Committee will hear additional testimony on Thursday, February 2 at 9:30 a.m. in room 142-S. The League will offer testimony at this time in support of SB 31 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/). Many cities responded to our Legislative Alert last week and provided testimony for the committee on the importance of passing SB 31 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb31/) to Kansas cities. The testimony collected can be found online at the League's website (<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.lkm.org/resource/resmgr/media/SB31-abandonedprop2017Jan26.pdf>).
- **State Water Plan Funding:** On Tuesday, January 31, the House Water & Environment Committee will hold a hearing on HB 2032 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2032/) in room 582-N. This bill would raise a number of fees to increase funding for the State Water Plan approximately \$6.36 million per year. Included in these increases is a doubling of the fee on municipal water, increasing it from \$.03 per 1,000 gallons sold at retail to \$.06 gallons sold per retail. The League will offer testimony in opposition to this bill, primarily due to the unbalanced impact it would have on municipal residents. If you have questions, please contact Erik Sartorius.
- **Campaigns:** Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government will hear several bills on Wednesday, February 1 regarding campaigns. These cleanup items were requested by Carol Williams, Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission. SB 57

(http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb57/) amends K.S.A. 25-4144 to require candidates and their campaign treasurer to provide their email address in addition to their mailing address. SB 58 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb58/) amends 2016 Supp. 25-4156 to allow websites, emails or other types of internet communication to contain the statements "paid for" or "sponsored by" followed by the chairperson or treasurer. Currently, it must be stated at the end of the internet communication. The change will allow it to be located anywhere in the communication. If you have questions about these bills, please contact Cindy Green.

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

2 | Action Happening Related to the Carrying of Concealed Handguns in Public Buildings

On Wednesday, February 1, the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs will hold a hearing on HB 2074

(http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2074/) at 9:00 a.m. in room 346-S. This bill is identical to SB 53

(http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb53/), please see the description below for details of the bill. The League will testify in support of HB 2074 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2074/).

On Thursday, February 2, the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs will hold a hearing on HB 2081

(http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2081/) at 9:00 a.m. in room 346-S. This bill was introduced at the request of the League to address a possible liability issue created by the removal of a public employer's ability to restrict the carrying of concealed handguns by employees. HB 2081 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/hb2081/) would amend K.S.A. 75-7c20 and provide immunity to public employers for any negligent acts related to an employee carrying a concealed handgun.

On Thursday, January 25, the League testified in support of SB 53 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb53/) before the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs. Current law would prevent a municipality from prohibiting the carrying of a concealed handgun into a public building, unless adequate security measures are in place or the building has an exemption from the requirement. However, under current law, that exemption process was set to expire in 2017. SB 53 (http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/sb53/) would remove that sunset date and retain the option for governing bodies to petition for an exemption to the law. The League will continue to monitor this bill and keep you apprised of any update within the committee. For more information, please contact Eric Smith.

3 | Local Government Day was a Great Success

Last Wednesday was the annual Local Government Day in Topeka. It was a great day in terms of collaboration and connecting. We had a record crowd at our reception for Local Government Day on January 25 with over 100 state representatives or senators joining local government leaders to discuss issues important to cities and counties. The Kansas Mayor's Association luncheon was well attended with Rep. Tom Phillips from Manhattan providing his take on current legislative priorities. The "If I Were Mayor" essay contest winners were announced. Six bright 7th graders from cities across Kansas were recognized. The winners this year came from Gardner (overall winner), Sharon Springs, Liberal, Bel Aire, Sylvan Grove and El Dorado. The winner's essay was read at the event and is available on the League's Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofKansasMunicipalities/videos/1078291945633516/>) page.

We were pleased to have four legislators in attendance on our panel on Local Government Day including Senate Vice President Jeff Longbine, Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, House Local Government Committee Chair Kristey Williams and House Minority Leader Jim Ward.

4 | Communications & Education Manager Hired

The League of Kansas Municipalities is pleased to announce the hiring of Megan Gilliland as the Communications and Education Manager. Gilliland began her employment with the League on January 19. At the League, Gilliland will focus on strategic communication efforts including expanding social media engagement, media relations and stakeholder participation. Gilliland will also serve as Editor-in-Chief of the Kansas Government Journal, a monthly publication of the League which focuses on Kansas cities and effective government best practices. Gilliland's comes to the League after a 14-year career in local government communications. Read the full release online (<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.lkm.org/resource/resmgr/media/Gilliland-hire-2017Jan24.pdf>).

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CONTACTS

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300 SW 8th Avenue, Topeka, KS 66603-3951

P: (785) 354-9565

F: (785) 354-4186

info@lkm.org (<mailto:info@lkm.org>)

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