

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

### Friday, January 23, 2026

Week two of the Kansas Legislative Session saw a noticeable uptick in activity, with a slate of informational hearings helping set the stage for legislation in the weeks ahead. Several bills with direct implications for cities were also introduced.

**Property Tax Rebate:** [SB 319](#) would create a property tax rebate program for owners of certain residential, commercial, or industrial property. If a qualifying property sells for less than 97% of its county-appraised value, the owner could apply for a rebate of the excess property taxes paid for that year (and up to four preceding years). The rebate is calculated by comparing the tax paid to what would have been owed based on sale price, with limits and eligibility rules on ownership, sale conditions, and prior credits. The League opposes the bill because it would rely on sales price to set valuations, create budget issues for cities, and involve the state in the sale and marketing of properties beyond current levels. A hearing was held this week in [Senate Assessment and Taxation](#).

**Property Tax Valuation Cap:** [SCR 1616](#) would amend the Kansas Constitution by limiting assessed value increases to no more than three percent. Last week it had a hearing in the [Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee](#). This week, it passed out of committee. Similar SCR's have previously passed the full Senate twice but never had a vote in the House. Whether it has enough votes in the Senate to pass this year is still undetermined, and it faces an uphill battle in the House. The League submitted testimony with concerns about the specific ways in which this amendment is written.

**State Budget:** While the final budget won't be finalized until later in the session, much work is being done by the legislature and governor on crafting the budget. Many committees spent time this week, and will continue next week, reviewing agency budgets and making recommendations. The League monitors closely to ensure programs that benefit cities are not negatively impacted during the process.

**Fluoride Ban:** [SB 333](#) would prohibit the use of fluoride additives in public water systems. Fluoridation could no longer be required or permitted, and any previous authorizations allowing fluoridation would be repealed. The League opposes, as this is a matter of local control, and should be a decision made by local elected officials in consultation with the citizens in their cities. The bill is in the [Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs](#). No hearing date has been set at this time.

**Right of Way:** Legislation will be introduced to provide funding for telecommunications companies to recover costs related to relocation of equipment in rights-of-way. The League has been working with the industry to ensure cities will not shoulder the burden of this

expense. Currently, these costs are paid by providers. We are confident a compromise can be reached and will continue to monitor.

**Sales Tax Exemptions:** Several sales tax exemption bills have been introduced and carried over from last session. Every time the state passes a sales tax exemption, it impacts local budgets. To date, the state estimates sales tax exemptions passed by the legislature equate to \$8.6 billion in lost revenue. While some exemptions are important, many have not been reviewed in years. This is a significant portion of revenue lost at the local level. The League asks that any sales tax exemption passed by the legislature have a sunset, so it can be reviewed every five years.

**Rent Qualifications Preemption:** [HB 2504](#) would prohibit cities and counties from adopting or enforcing local ordinances that limit a landlord's discretion in choosing tenants based on lawful income sources, credit history, or eviction record. It also prevents local limits on security deposit amounts or automatic rights of first refusal. The League opposes general preemption bills, especially when there is not a statewide issue to address. No hearing has been sent at this time.

**If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, or others, contact Spencer Duncan, Government Affairs Director, at 785-354-9565 or [sduncan@lkm.org](mailto:sduncan@lkm.org).**

**KORA Exception for Retirees in Certain Positions:** [HB 2419](#) received a hearing this week in House Judiciary. Currently, there is a KORA exception that establishes a process for certain state and municipal employees holding safety sensitive positions (like police officers, judges, and city attorneys) to request that their address be removed from certain searchable websites. This bill extends this protection to individuals who have retired from these positions. The League submitted testimony in support of this bill and will continue to watch it.

**Annexation:** [SB 124](#) will likely be set for a hearing in the coming weeks. The bill, as written, effectively eliminates the ability of cities to unilaterally annex territory, provides limitations on growth when a government entity owns the land on the border of communities, and seeks to provide standing to challenge strip or corridor annexations. This bill had an informational hearing last year. Following that hearing, the proponents have been in contact with the League to see if there is any room for compromise on some of their issues. They have expressed a willingness to move on some of their positions to get something passed. The League is reviewing their requested amendments to see if there is anything that does not materially hinder the ability to annex land but also addresses some of their concerns.

**If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, contact John Goodyear, General Counsel, at 785-354-9565 or [jgoodyear@lkm.org](mailto:jgoodyear@lkm.org).**

**Water Reuse:** [HB 2462](#) would require the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to establish rules to provide guidance for the re-use of wastewater effluent for consumer use by July 1, 2028. The House Water Committee held a hearing on January 22.

**If you have any questions or comments on this issue, contact Wendi Stark, Legislative Liaison, at 785-354-9565 or [wstark@lkm.org](mailto:wstark@lkm.org).**

**TESTIMONY NEEDED: Prohibition Of Express Advocacy by Local Officials:** [SB314](#) prohibits the use of public assets by government officers and employees to advocate for or against amendments and ballot questions submitted to qualified electors. This poses issues defining “express advocacy” and what information local officials will be able to provide to educate constituents on the matters. Committee information can be found [here](#). Testimony can be submitted to [S.Fed.State.Affairs@senate.ks.gov](mailto:S.Fed.State.Affairs@senate.ks.gov) and must be turned in NO LATER than 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 27. A similar companion bill, [HB 2451](#), had a hearing this week in the [House Committee on Elections](#).

**CONTACT HOUSE MEMBERS: Even-Year Elections:** [HB 2452](#) would reschedule elections for cities, school districts, community colleges, and other local “municipalities” to be held in even-numbered years instead of current odd-year timing, and standardize the terms of municipal elected officials at two or four years. It establishes the first elections under the new schedule for August and November 2028 and adjusts existing terms so they align with the new cycle, by reducing current terms by one year. An amendment was also added making it legal for someone running for two offices to be on the same ballot (i.e. running for legislature and city council). The League opposes and is asking you to contact House Members immediately to express your concerns. The bill passed the [House Elections Committee](#) and is headed to the full House for a vote.

The League is concerned that moving city elections to even-numbered years will dilute focus on local issues; increase ballot fatigue; and undermine the nonpartisan, community-focused nature of municipal government. City elections often involve complex local matters such as public safety, infrastructure, utilities, and land use, which risk being overshadowed by federal and statewide races on already lengthy ballots. The proposal would also eliminate local discretion over election timing, conflicting with Kansas’s long-standing home-rule tradition, and could tie local offices more closely to national partisan politics.

You can find House members [here](#) and if to find your specific legislator, visit [this site](#). While we are unsure when a vote on the floor may occur, we are asking cities to contact House members as soon as possible.

**If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, contact Sage Pourmirza, at 785-354-9565 or [spourmirza@lkm.org](mailto:spourmirza@lkm.org).**

**License Plates:** [SB 325](#) would define what it means for a license plate to be “clearly legible” or “clearly visible” for purposes of displaying a vehicle license plate and text on it under traffic laws. The bill is a response to the Kansas Supreme Court’s recent decision in [State v.](#)

[Beck](#). This bill would clarify when law enforcement officers are permitted to make a traffic stop, which could enhance public safety. The League supports this bill. A hearing will be held in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) on Wednesday, January 28. Testimony can be submitted to [S.Transportation@senate.ks.gov](mailto:S.Transportation@senate.ks.gov) but must be turned in NO LATER than 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 27.

**Animal Shelters:** [SB 344](#) would provide animal shelters the option to release animals from custody following a holding period to foster homes that could provide care to sick, injured, or neonate animals needing treatment or care the shelter could not provide. Additionally, the bill would require that photographs of animals not being held at a shelter be displayed at the shelter and the shelter's website. A hearing will be held Tuesday, January 27 in the [Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee](#). Testimony can be submitted to [S.Agriculture@senate.ks.gov](mailto:S.Agriculture@senate.ks.gov) but must be turned in NO LATER than 8:30 a.m. Monday, January 26. The League supports and is seeking feedback from cities on the bill.

**Golf Carts:** [SB 367](#) would give cities the authority to pass ordinances that would allow people to drive golf carts on sidewalks, so long as they are at least 16 years old and have a valid Class C driver's license. This bill has been set for hearing on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup> in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#). Testimony can be submitted to [S.Transportation@senate.ks.gov](mailto:S.Transportation@senate.ks.gov) but must be turned in NO LATER than 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 28. The League is seeking feedback from cities on the bill.

**If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, contact Anne Marie Yatsula, at 785-354-9565 or [ayatsula@lkm.org](mailto:ayatsula@lkm.org).**