

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Friday, January 30, 2026

While every legislative session is 90 days each year, some really are faster than others. This is one of those years, as certain dates on the legislative calendar have been moved up to get committees to address issues earlier in the session. The first three weeks of the 2026 session have been full of informational hearings and some bill hearings. We expect the next two weeks to be busy with bill hearings, many of which may impact cities. Monday is the last day for legislators to introduce bills in non-exempt committees, which means a flurry of bills could be filed in the next few days.

Non-exempt committees are those that must complete their work by designated deadlines, or the bills they are considering are likely done for the session. Exempt committees, of which each chamber has only a few, can continue to work on bills at any time during the session. Once the deadline hits, some bills that did not get hearings in non-exempt committees will be blessed by leadership and allowed to still hold hearings or move to exempt committees for consideration. This is why when we say nothing is ever dead in the legislature, it's very true!

TESTIMONY NEEDED: By-Right Housing Development: [SB 418](#) creates the By-Right Housing Development Act, aimed at accelerating housing construction by requiring residential developments (including single-family homes, townhouses, and accessory dwelling units) that meet existing zoning and land use standards be automatically approved without discretionary review by local planning commissions or zoning boards. The bill allows third-party review of development documents and inspections if a city doesn't act within 15 days, sets uniform minimum standards for small single-family residential construction (such as allowed building code versions, garage types, and lot sizes), and changes procedures for zoning amendments - including removing protest petition rights when a property owner seeks rezoning to single-family residential. All land within city limits would be treated as zoned for single-family residential use under this act, and cities would be restricted from applying rules that conflict with these provisions.

The League opposes, as this bill creates numerous issues for cities and encroaches on Constitutional Home Rule and local control.

A hearing is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 3 in [Senate Commerce](#). Testimony is due NO LATER than 10 a.m. Monday to commerce@senate.ks.gov Hard copies must also be turned into the committee, and the League can assist with delivering if you email the testimony to us by 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning.

Because SB 418 limits local review authority, cities could lose flexibility in shaping growth and ensuring developments align with local infrastructure, environmental, or comprehensive plan goals. Automatic approvals and third-party reviews may shift regulatory control away from municipal planners to external reviewers, potentially increasing administrative complexity or legal disputes. Restrictions on zoning processes — including eliminating certain public protest petition options — could reduce resident input on local land use decisions and strain city resources if appeals increase. And, mandated minimum building standards may conflict with local codes designed to reflect specific community needs and safety considerations. Many citizens in communities have also indicated that they oppose by-right development in their neighborhoods.

FEEDBACK NEEDED: Homestead Property Tax Freeze: [HB 2457](#) would limit the annual property tax for residential homesteads owned and occupied by Kansans aged 65 or older so that the tax owed in future years cannot exceed the amount owed in the base year (the year the owner turns 65 or 2026 for those already 65). This is intended to provide relief for older homeowners. The bill would also eliminate certain property tax exemptions for nonprofit-owned healthcare properties when they compete with similar non-exempt facilities, meaning such properties could become taxable. It has a hearing in [House Taxation](#) at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 5. The League needs feedback from members before taking a position on the bill, and asks cities to email sduncan@lkm.org with their thoughts.

Right of Way Reimbursement: [HB 2544](#) establishes the Relocation Reimbursement Assistance Fund to help communications service providers cover costs when a municipality requires them to relocate infrastructure in the public right-of-way. The bill directs the State Treasurer to administer the fund and sets up a process for providers to apply for reimbursement of relocation costs. Starting July 1, 2027, the bill also mandates an annual \$2 million transfer from certain insurance premium tax revenues into the fund to support these payments. The bill does not create a new local fee. Cities may see indirect effects on negotiations with providers or on timing of relocation orders, but HB 2544 does not impose new direct costs or mandates on cities. The League has worked with the industry on this legislation and is supporting, with the caveat that the reimbursements must not have to be made by cities. A hearing was held this week in [House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications](#).

Broadband Franchise Agreements: [HB 2586](#) would update how cities handle franchise agreements with telecommunications service providers by requiring that revenues earned from providing broadband internet services be included when determining gross receipts for franchise fee calculations. The bill amends existing law governing municipal franchises to clarify that broadband internet access services are part of the gross receipts base and makes adjustments to reflect modern telecommunications services in franchise negotiations between cities and providers. The bill is set for hearing at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, February 3 in [House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications](#).

The League is reviewing the legislation and supports its intent but will have some recommended changes to the language and possible amendments. By clarifying that broadband internet services are included in franchise fee gross receipts, the bill helps

ensure that cities are fairly compensated when private providers use public streets, poles, and infrastructure to deliver modern services. Without this clarification, cities risk losing franchise revenue as providers shift from traditional cable or telecom services to broadband-only models, even though the impact on local infrastructure remains the same.

Multiple Occupancy Private Space Restrictions: [House Substitute for SB 244](#) establishes new statewide requirements governing the designation and use of multiple-occupancy private spaces - such as restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms, and showers - in public buildings. The bill requires governing bodies of public entities to designate these spaces for use by only one biological sex, with limited exceptions. This bill was passed by the House 87-36 and Senate 30-9 on Emergency Final Action on Wednesday. It now goes to the governor, who is likely to veto, with an override attempt also expected.

The bill creates enforcement mechanisms allowing complaints and actions by the attorney general or local prosecutors, authorizes civil penalties against governmental entities for noncompliance, and permits private causes of action for alleged privacy violations. The bill also includes provisions affecting state-issued identification documents by requiring them to reflect biological sex as defined in statute. For cities, this legislation has direct operational and fiscal impacts, including the need to review and redesignate facilities in municipal buildings, update signage and policies, train staff on compliance and exceptions, and manage the risk of fines, enforcement actions, or civil liability if city facilities are found to be out of compliance.

FISCAL INFORMATION NEEDED: The Budget Office has requested the fiscal effect on cities related to [H Sub for SB 244](#). We estimate that this will cost cities millions of dollars; however, we would like to provide more detailed information to the fiscal analyst. Please reach out to [Wendi](#) with the number of city-owned buildings and approximate number of restrooms, locker/changing rooms, and showers that could be affected by this bill by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 2.

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 set at this time.

Undocumented & Public Benefits: [SB 254](#) passed the Senate 30-9 and proposes changes to how state and local government agencies administer public benefits with a focus on immigration status and eligibility. Key provisions impacting cities are that no person *unlawfully present* in the United States is eligible for any state or local public benefit, except those required by federal law. Applicants 18 and older need to show proof of lawful presence when applying for benefits and local agencies must verify immigration status through the federal systematic verification program. The League opposes the bill as written and will ask for an amendment on the House side clarifying that cities will not be out of

compliance when providing immediate need services such as food, warmer center allowances, and similar services.

Neighborhood Revitalization: [HB 2470](#) would allow cities in Kansas with populations of 10,000 or less to designate their entire municipal boundaries as a neighborhood revitalization area under the Kansas Neighborhood Revitalization Act. This change would make it easier for municipalities meeting specific criteria to offer property tax rebates and other incentives across the whole city to encourage redevelopment, renovation, and new investment, rather than limiting revitalization incentives to smaller, discrete areas. The League supports and a hearing is set in [House Taxation](#).

Emergency Medical Response: [SB 379](#) attempts to strengthen emergency medical response by creating a statewide emergency medical dispatch and telecommunicator CPR program under the Kansas 911 Act. It authorizes the State 911 Board to establish standardized protocols, training, and quality assurance, including hiring or contracting with a medical director, while allowing local 911 centers to participate in the statewide program or continue using their own systems. SB 379 creates a dedicated fund to support these services and provides liability protections for entities and individuals involved, except in cases of gross negligence. It had a hearing in the [Senate Committee on Utilities](#), with no action taken. The League is monitoring and encourages cities to provide us feedback on the bill.

Sports Tourism Grant: [Sub HB 2346](#) would establish the Kansas Sports Tourism Grant Program, administered by the Secretary of Commerce, to provide matching state grants to communities and organizations that host or develop sporting events aimed at boosting tourism and generating economic activity. The grants would be matched \$1-for-\$1 with local sponsor funds, based on post-event economic impact and hotel stays, and capped annually at \$1.5 million. The program would fund eligible expenses tied to events that attract out-of-state participants, require reporting on economic impact and hotel room usage, and exclude professional major league and certain school sports events; it also creates a dedicated grant fund with initial transfers from the state economic development initiatives fund or general fund and includes an annual reporting requirement to the legislature. The program sunsets June 30, 2030, with remaining funds returned to the state general fund. It is set for hearing on Tuesday, February 3 in House [Commerce, Labor and Economic Development](#). The League is monitoring.

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 because it would rely on sale 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 in [Senate Assessment and Taxation](#), with no action taken.

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](#). 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 this year is undetermined, and it faces an uphill battle in the House. The League submitted testimony with concerns about specific ways in which this amendment is written.

Utility Pole Agreements: [SB 373](#) limits how long law enforcement can place equipment on utility poles or other public utility structures without a warrant or court authorization. Under the bill, a public utility cannot allow a law enforcement agency to attach or operate equipment on its poles or structures for more than 30 days unless there is a valid warrant, court order, or subpoena — and any evidence collected after 30 days without proper authorization would be inadmissible in court. The bill also provides liability protection for utilities that comply with these requirements. No hearing has been set.

Consumer Prescription Protection: [SB 360](#) creates the Kansas Consumer Prescription Protection and Accountability Act, establishing new regulation of pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs) — entities that administer prescription drug benefits for health plans. The bill sets requirements for how PBMs and auditing entities must conduct audits, mandates annual reporting by PBMs and health plans on rebates and reimbursements, and gives the state insurance commissioner authority to examine PBMs for compliance. SB 360 specifies minimum reimbursement amounts for prescription drugs and pharmacy services: PBMs must reimburse pharmacies at *no less than the national average drug acquisition cost (NADAC) plus a professional dispensing fee of at least \$10.50* (or the state Medicaid dispensing fee if higher). This may create an added cost for cities. The League is monitoring. The bill had a hearing in the [Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance](#).

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 has been set 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.

TESTIMONY NEEDED: Annexation: [SB 124](#) 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. The bill is set for a hearing in [Senate Local Government](#) on Tuesday, February 3 at 9:30 a.m. The League will give testimony opposing the bill.

If you would like to submit testimony, you must notify the committee assistant by email at Transparency@senate.ks.gov before 9:30 a.m. on Monday, February 2. A PDF of your testimony and a completed [cover sheet](#) must be sent by 12:00 p.m. on Monday, February 2. Hard copies of testimony are required as well, which the League can deliver on your behalf if you email us the cover sheet and testimony by 10:00 a.m. on Monday.

Consequential Damages in Public Construction Contracts: [SB 335](#) will be heard on Wednesday, February 4 in [Senate Commerce](#) at 1:30 p.m. The bill would require that all public construction contracts include a mutual waiver of consequential damages. The League opposes the bill as it limits the freedom of cities to negotiate contractual terms. Additionally, while the situations in which consequential damage may arise for a city may be limited, we do not think we should be precluded by law from seeking those damages. Any waiver to the right to seek and recover damages should be weighed carefully by the public entity entering the contract, not forced into contracts by state action.

Contingency Fee Contracts for Legal Services: The attorney general's office introduced [HB 2593](#) this week and we anticipate that it will have a hearing soon. The bill closely resembles a piece of legislation passed last year but vetoed by Governor Kelly. The bill would require municipal governments to submit contingency-fee legal service contracts to the attorney general's office for review and approval. The League opposes the bill and will be requesting amendments to clarify the justifications allowing the attorney general to invalidate a contract for legal services and to provide a mechanism for judicial review of the attorney general's determination on the representation agreement.

Competency Evaluations in Municipal Court: The League introduced a bill this week that would establish procedures for determining a person's competence to stand trial in municipal court. The proposed legislation mirrors a [recommendation](#) made by the Judicial Council in 2025. The bill has not been numbered yet.

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.

TESTIMONY NEEDED: Water Grant Program: [SB 317](#) would establish rules, regulations, and additional criteria for the water projects grant fund and the water technical assistance fund. The League does not have an opinion on the establishment of rules and regulations but has some concerns regarding the criteria starting at the bottom of page seven. Please submit testimony if you have any feedback or concerns about this bill. We will submit neutral testimony. A hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 4 in the [Senate Committee](#) on Agriculture and Natural Resources. Testimony can be submitted to S.Agriculture@senate.ks.gov but must be turned in NO LATER than 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, February 3.

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 bill passed unanimously out of the House Water Committee yesterday.

Water Funding: [HB 2558](#) would increase funding for the Technical Assistance Fund Grants from \$5 M to \$15.5 M and increase funding for the Water Projects Fund Grants from \$12 M to \$22.5 M annually for the next three years. No hearing date has been set, but the bill is expected to have a hearing in the next two weeks.

Flashing Lights in Construction Zones: [HB 2522](#) would permit highway construction and maintenance vehicles to be equipped with flashing amber, white, and green lights in road construction zones and flashing blue and white lights under certain conditions. We will submit neutral testimony. Our concerns relate to the blue flashing lights. A hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 3, on the House [Transportation Committee](#). Testimony can be submitted to H.Transportation@house.ks.gov but must be turned in NO LATER than 1:30 p.m. Monday, February 2.

If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, contact Wendi Stark, Legislative Liaison, at 785-354-9565 or wstark@lkm.org.

Mail Ballot Elections: [HB2503](#) is a repeal of the mail ballot election act. This bill would eliminate mail ballot elections at all levels. The League opposes as mail ballot elections have proven effective for cities, and it takes away an avenue for members to engage constituents in certain local elections. The bill is set for a hearing on Tuesday, February 3 in the [House Committee on Elections](#). Anyone wishing to provide testimony can submit it to H.Elections@house.ks.gov NO LATER than 9 a.m. Monday morning.

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](#). 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.

License Plates: A hearing was held on [SB 325](#) in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) on Wednesday, January 28. The bill is intended to respond to the Kansas Supreme Court's ruling in [State v. Beck](#), where the court found that current law on license plates does not require a state's name to be displayed on a license plate. The League submitted written proponent testimony on the bill; other proponents pointed to increased officer safety and a need for clarity in the law as reasons to support. Opponents suggested the change could result in citations being issued for innocent conduct, as a decorative license plate frame could obscure the state name on a license plate. The Committee anticipates working the bill next week.

Animal Shelters: [SB 344](#) provides 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 cannot provide. Additionally, the bill would require that photographs of animals not held at a shelter be displayed at the shelter and the shelter's website. A hearing on the bill was held in the [Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee](#) on Tuesday, January 27. The League submitted proponent testimony that suggested broadening the photograph display requirement to include social media or other locations so that shelters without websites can still comply.

Golf Carts: [SB 367](#) would give cities the authority to pass ordinances to 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. A hearing on the bill was held in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) on Thursday, January 29. The League submitted proponent testimony. Another proponent explained that the change was prompted in part by concerns from individuals who drive on sidewalks from their homes to nearby golf courses in golf carts, which is currently illegal under [state law](#). The Committee expressed concerns with the bill, particularly related to pedestrian safety, lack of signage requirements, and lack of a maximum distance a golf cart could be driven. The bill could be worked by the Committee next week.

Drivers' License Suspensions: [HB 2467](#) would amend the failure-to-comply statute by limiting the use of traffic citation convictions or sanctions that are more than five years old when determining eligibility to restore driving privileges. Under the bill, drivers would also become automatically eligible for reinstatement after five years in certain cases. The League is monitoring the bill's potential impact on municipal court operations following a hearing on Monday, January 26, before the [House Transportation Committee](#).

If you have any questions or comments on any of these issues, contact Anne Marie Yatsula, at 785-354-9565 or ayatsula@lkm.org.