

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Friday, February 6, 2026

It was an extremely busy week at the Kansas Legislature with numerous hearings on bills impacting cities in Kansas. Next week is no different, as things reach their peak mid-session form. There are several bills that we are asking you to submit testimony on or contact legislators.

Thank you to all our members who submitted testimony over the past few weeks. We appreciate all of you.

ACTION NEEDED: Property Tax Legislation: The League has information on an upcoming property tax proposal and is requesting all cities be ready to counter this legislation. The bill itself is not yet available, but will be early next week. However, we know the general proposal:

New Section

- a. Election provision: taxing jurisdictions seeking to exceed limit from (b) must set new limit (in dollars) not to exceed and place on November ballot for next year's budget. For instance, municipalities will have to work on this year's budget for the 2027 tax year, plus plan for 2028 and put it on the ballot in November 2026 to exceed the limit for the budget they work on in 2027. Election is good for one year only, cannot attempt multiple years. Failed election forces limit from (b). Should extenuating circumstances arise, any municipality can propose an increase by special election if the November deadline has passed.
- b. Calculation of property tax limit:
 1. three percent flat year over year increase;
 2. adjusted for capture of new construction;
 3. revenue for bond elections approved are not subject to cap; and
 4. State and K12 school districts are not subject to cap.

New Section

- a. Establishes Property Tax Relief Fund.
- b. Demand Transfer made of \$60M, with a two percent growth multiplier per year.
- c. State Treasurer calculates apportionment to each county (distributions go to county, no other entities, can adopt interlocal apportionment agreement).

1. 20% equally to each county
2. 40% proportionate to population
3. 40% proportionate to total assessed valuation

d. Failed election disqualifies PTRF allocation.

e. Eligible counties receive distribution on or before Jan 15.

f. Payments received in error must be returned.

K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 72-5137

- Strikes RNR reference from school district statute.

K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 79-2929

- Strikes RNR reference from budget form.

K.S.A. 2025 Supp 79-2988

- Modifies RNR statute to remove RNR calculation and RNR hearing requirement and converts RNR Notice to Property Tax Estimate notice and modifies form structure and data accordingly.

K.S.A. 2025 Supp 79-2989

- Makes cost reimbursement permanent.

The League has many concerns with this proposal. **We are asking two things from you:** First, please send your feedback and how this would impact your city to sduncan@lkm.org and second, please start preparing testimony now that you can have ready when this bill gets a hearing. We expect that it could happen at any time with limited notice.

CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS: **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 and duplexes), 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 was held in [Senate Commerce](#). Contact members of the committee now and let them know your concerns. The committee could vote on the bill any day next week.

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.

Electric Fence Regulation Preemption: [HB 2603](#) would prohibit cities, counties, and other local governments in Kansas from regulating battery-charged security fences, preventing municipalities from adopting local rules or ordinances that govern the design, installation, or use of these types of security fences. The bill aims to create a uniform statewide standard for battery-powered security fence regulation by removing local regulatory authority in this area. The League opposes, as this is an overreach and encroachment on Constitutional Home Rule and local control. A hearing is set for 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 10 in [House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development](#). Testimony can be submitted to commerce.labor.econ@house.ks.gov and turned in NO LATER than 1:30 p.m. Monday.

CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS: **Rent Qualifications Preemption:** [HB 2504](#) and [SB 391](#) 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. Both bills had hearings this week: HB 2504 in [House Federal and State Affairs](#) and SB 391 in [Senate Federal State Affairs](#). We encourage you to contact members of each committee and express your concerns with this legislation.

CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS: **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 Monday, February 10. Contact members of the committee now and let them know your concerns.

Undocumented & Public Benefits: [SB 254](#) passed the Senate 30-9 and the House 86-36 this week. It 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 in conference committee clarifying that cities will not be out of compliance when providing immediate need services such as food, warming center allowances, and similar services.

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 be made by cities. The bill passed out of the [House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications](#), and heads to the full House for consideration.

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. 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.

Election Vacancies: [SB 392](#) updates election law by addressing candidate withdrawals and joint candidacies. The bill provides that if a vacancy occurs in a filed joint candidacy for governor and lieutenant governor, the vacancy cannot be filled and the entire joint ticket is terminated, requiring a new joint candidacy to be filed. It also allows candidates in city, school district, and community college elections to withdraw after the filing deadline under limited circumstances - such as a severe medical hardship or moving out of the district - if the withdrawal is certified by the county election officer by September 1 of the election year. It is scheduled for hearing on Tuesday, February 10 in [Senate Federal and State Affairs](#). The League supports, as this addresses an issue that has occurred in local elections.

Homestead Qualification: [SB 397](#) proposes changes to the homestead property tax refund and Selective Assistance for Effective Senior Relief (SAFESR) tax credit programs. Under current law, homeowners lose eligibility for the homestead refund if the appraised value of their home exceeds \$350,000 in a given year. SB 397 allows persons who previously qualified for a refund or SAFESR credit when their home was valued at \$350,000 or less to continue claiming the refund or credit in future years - even if the appraised value rises above that threshold - so long as they continue to meet all other statutory requirements. The League supports. A hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10 in [Senate Assessment and Taxation](#).

Homestead Qualifications Part 2: [SB 402](#) proposes changes to Kansas's homestead property tax relief and SAFESR (Selective Assistance for Effective Senior Relief) income tax credit programs by updating how household income is defined, creating a single combined refund claim form, and adding new eligibility rules to help taxpayers maintain benefits. The bill would allow people who must live away from their homestead due to health or other hardships to remain eligible for the homestead refund, and it would ensure that a homeowner who qualified for a refund or SAFESR credit in a previous year does not lose eligibility in later years simply because the appraised value of their home exceeds \$350,000, as long as they meet other requirements. A hearing is set for Tuesday, February 10 in [Senate Assessment and Taxation](#).

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 was held in [House Taxation](#).

Earnings Tax: [HB 2385](#) would allow cities and counties to put an earnings tax on the ballot for voters to consider and, if approved, levy a tax of up to 1% on the wages of nonresidents who work within the city or county. The proposal would require the question to be resubmitted to voters every 10 years, including certain credits and, and require employers to withhold and remit the tax if enacted. Revenue from the tax would be pledged for infrastructure (for cities) or general purposes (for counties), with at least half credited to reducing property tax burdens. The League is neutral on the bill, as an earnings tax would help cities reduce property taxes, however our position is clear that it is up to local elected officials and their citizens to determine how these dollars are spent. We oppose the section of the bill that mandates how those dollars must be spent. A hearing is set for Monday in [House Taxation](#).

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 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 in [Senate Assessment and Taxation](#), with no action taken.

Transient Guest Tax Change: [HB 2481](#) would change Kansas's transient guest tax law by removing the current requirement that a lodging facility (like a hotel, motel, or tourist court) must have *at least two bedrooms* to be considered a taxable rental. Under the bill, any structure offering rooms for lodging to transient guests would be subject to the transient guest tax, expanding the definition of taxable lodging and potentially increasing tax collections on a broader range of short-term rental properties. The League was neutral. A hearing was held this week in [House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development](#).

FEEDBACK REQUESTED: Form Based Codes: [HB 2701](#) would change local zoning regulations by allowing cities and counties to adopt non-uniform zoning rules within the same zoning district for different kinds of buildings or land uses. Under current law, zoning districts generally must apply the same standards across all uses; this bill would explicitly permit variation in regulations for different classes of structures or uses within a district, changing how local governments manage land use and development. No hearing date has been set. The League is requesting feedback on this bill from our members as we determine the best approach to this legislation.

FEEDBACK REQUESTED: County Sales Tax Authority: [HB 2712](#) would expand local sales tax authority by allowing cities and counties to propose new or increased retailers' sales taxes to voters for a variety of local purposes, including infrastructure and public services, and by setting clearer rules for how these dedicated tax revenues can be used and how long special purpose taxes may remain in effect (limiting them to 10 years). The bill updates existing city and countywide retailers' sales tax laws to provide more flexibility in dedicating revenue for local projects while requiring voter approval before the taxes can take effect. The League has some concerns with the current language of the bill and is working on amendments. The League is also asking for feedback from members as we determine the best approach to this legislation.

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.

Limitations on Suits for Public Nuisance: [SB 462](#) places limitations on civil actions for public nuisance. It limits what would be considered a public nuisance, requires a showing of "special injury" in order for the claim to be valid, would give the attorney general's office the responsibility of filing the action on behalf of government entities if the harm is not wholly contained within the jurisdiction of one city, and would prevent cities from receiving monetary damages in a public nuisance claim. The bill has been set for a hearing in [Senate Judiciary](#) on Tuesday, February 10 at 10:30 a.m. The League will be appearing in opposition to the bill.

TESTIMONY NEEDED: Contingency Fee Contracts for Legal Services: [HB 2593](#) would require municipal governments to submit contingency-fee legal service contracts to the attorney general's office for review and approval. The bill has been set for a hearing at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10 in [House Judiciary](#). 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.

If you would like to submit testimony, you must email a PDF of your testimony and a completed [cover sheet](#) to H.Judiciary@house.ks.gov by 3:30 p.m. on Monday, February 9. If appearing in person hard copies of testimony are also required, which the League can deliver on your behalf if you email us the cover sheet and testimony by 2:30 p.m. on Monday.

Energy Bill: [HB 2483](#) will have two days of hearings (Tuesday, February 10 and Thursday, February 12) this week in [House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications](#). This bill comes from a group seeking to lower electric utility rates. There are a number of troubling provisions in the bill, and the League will be offering testimony in opposition. Notably, the bill modifies service territory provisions in a way that would be harmful to the current landscape of public utilities providing electricity and municipal electric utilities. Additionally, the bill would preempt cities and counties from restricting or regulating nuclear energy facilities.

Right of Way Parity: [HB 2586](#) had a hearing this week in [House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications](#). This bill would require telecommunications providers that provide broadband services to pay franchise fees to municipal governments for those broadband services. While better than the status quo, the legislation has some holes in it, and the League was neutral on the bill suggesting ways that could close those loopholes. The chair of the committee has asked that conferees get together and work out what a new regulatory statute should look like. This bill is unlikely to advance this session.

Competency Evaluations in Municipal Court: [SB 481](#) establishes a procedure for ordering and determining competency in municipal court. The League introduced this bill and will be testifying in support. It has been set for a hearing in [Senate Judiciary](#) on Thursday, February 12 at 10:30 a.m.

Annexation: [SB 124](#) was heard in [Senate Local Government](#) on Tuesday, February 3. The bill would effectively eliminate unilateral annexation. The League and a number of cities opposed the bill. We are continuing to watch the legislation.

Consequential Damages in Public Construction Contracts: [SB 335](#) was heard in [Senate Commerce](#) this week. The bill would require that all public construction contracts include a mutual waiver of consequential damages. The League opposed the bill and continues to watch it.

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 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. In addition, this bill would extend the grant programs from July 1, 2026 to July 1, 2028. We will submit proponent testimony. If your city plans to apply for either one of these grants this year, we encourage your city to submit testimony. A hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 10, in the [House Water Committee](#). Testimony can be submitted to Water@house.ks.gov but must be turned in NO LATER than 9 a.m. Monday, February 9.

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 had a hearing 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](#). 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.

Municipal Specialty Courts and Expungements: [HB 2655](#) would authorize the chief judges of municipal courts to establish specialty court programs and would provide for expungement of convictions and related arrest records when a person has completed a specialty court program. The bill has been set for hearing on Wednesday, February 11 in the [House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee](#). The League is researching the bill's possible effects on municipal court operations and plans to submit proponent testimony.

AI Taskforce: [HB 2592](#) would establish a task force on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies that would study the impacts of artificial intelligence and related emerging technologies and explore the use of artificial intelligence throughout the state to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of state and local government. The bill has been set for hearing on Monday, February 9 in the [House Legislative Modernization Committee](#). The League submitted proponent testimony and is seeking an amendment to include a city representative on the task force.

Golf Carts: [SB 367](#) would give cities the authority to pass an ordinance 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. On Wednesday, February 4, the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) voted to amend the bill. The amendment narrows the bill so that a city ordinance could only allow golf carts to be driven on sidewalks for the limited use of driving to or from the golf course.

License Plates: [SB 325](#) 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 clearly visible on a license plate. The [Senate Transportation Committee](#) recommended it favorably for consideration by the full Senate on Thursday, February 5.

Railroad Hall of Fame: [SB 353](#) would establish a Railroad Hall of Fame to recognize the individuals who developed rail transportation in Kansas. The Railroad Hall of Fame would be housed at the [Great Plains Transportation Museum](#) in Wichita. The bill provides for a selection committee for the Railroad Hall of Fame. A hearing on the bill will be held on Wednesday, February 11 in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#). The bill was also introduced as [HB 2607](#). A hearing on HB 2607 will be held on Tuesday, February 10 in the [House Transportation Committee](#). The League supports 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.