



KANSAS
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

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Kansas Association of Counties Legislative Update February 26, 2021

Welcome to the 2021 Kansas Legislative Session. This is the first year of the biennium, so bills and resolutions from the 2020 Session do not carry over to the 2021 Session. For many bills, all that means is that they get a new number and start over. The bill numbers will start over at 1 (Senate) and 2001 (House).

For a review of common legislative terms, please refer to the “Common Legislative Terms” list on the www.KansasCounties.org website in the “Services” Tab under “Legislative,” or bookmark <http://www.kansascounties.org/services/legislative/common-legislative-terms.pdf/view>

Summaries of all legislation passed during the 2020 session or special session can be found at www.kslegresearch.org under the Publications tab by searching the 2020 Summary of Legislation and 2020 Legislative Highlights. You can also find helpful resources in the Legislative Briefing Book. Topics of interest covered in the 2021 Briefing Book include Elections and Ethics, Redistricting, State and Local Government, Taxation and Transportation, among others.

What Happened This Week

KAC testified on both Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 1606, which would grant county home rule authority constitutional protection, and SB 153, which would set up the process to establish term limits for county commissioners in Senate Local Government. Neither of these provisions will be moving forward.

SB 98, which would place the burden of proof on the county appraiser in certain valuation and classification appeal hearings before the district court and extend the time a state board of tax appeals member may continue to serve after that member's term has expired and SB 119, which would 1) change the time to request full and complete opinions from the state board tax appeals; 2) require the state board of tax appeals to serve orders and notices by electronic means if requested by the party; 3) prohibit valuation increases of certain property in appeals; 4) require appraisal directives to require compliance with uniform standards of professional appraisal practice; and 5) provide for notice and opportunity to be heard prior to removal from county appraiser eligibility list and providing notification when an individual no longer holds office of county appraiser, were heard in Senate Assessment and Taxation. SB 119 was passed out of committee. KAC is concerned as to whether the provision in the bill that prohibits valuation increases on appeal will pass constitutional muster, and submitted both oral and written testimony as such. SB 98 also passed out of committee.

HB 2248, which increases state financial assistance to local health departments under specified circumstances – passed out of committee as well.

SB167, which would classify certain utility vehicles as authorized emergency vehicles, requiring certain safety protocols be in place when the vehicle is stopped to manage an emergency situation, was also passed out of committee. The intent of the bill is to require vehicles to move over when passing vehicles repairing utilities to protect the safety of the workers, but the authorized emergency vehicle statute may be more broad than necessary. KAC continues to monitor this bill.

HB2281 which would establish the 988 suicide prevention hotline passed out of committee. A fee would be added to phone services to pay for this hotline, similar to the 911 fees.

What's Coming Next Week

Next week is turnaround week, which means there will probably be few, if any committee meetings during the week. All of the action is likely to be on the floor of the House and Senate.

Two very different Kansas Emergency Management Act bills will likely see debate in their respective chambers. HB 2416 and SB 273 had hearings this week, and it is likely that at least one, possibly both, will move through their chamber of origin. These bills take very different approaches to emergencies, so it will be important to see what happens to each bill, and what positions are up for negotiation if this heads to a conference committee, as I anticipate.

There are several elections provisions in both chambers that are worth watching. On the Senate side, SB 11 (prohibiting altering or backdating postmarks) was heard this week. KAC is unsure of the function of this bill, as altering a postmark is a federal crime. SB 94, a bill that would require all voting systems to use individual voter verified paper ballots was also heard. This bill would affect only a handful of counties as they update their voting machines, but is also important to track as other provisions or amendments affecting elections could be added. SB 206 would place certain restrictions on third party groups soliciting advance ballot applications. On the House side, HB 2332, which is similar to SB 206, may see floor action. HB 2339 would expand the crime of election tampering. That could also make its way across the House floor. HB 2355 would add clarifying language on bond law elections, as well as delete the requirement for election commissioners to reside in the county that they are election commissioner of. KAC is watching each of these measures.

Floor action will likely be very busy next week as all of the provisions listed above could be debated, in addition to many others not listed here. KAC will have a full breakdown of Turnaround week next week.

There are, of course other bills working their way through the legislature. If there is a particular bill or issue of concern to you or your county, feel free to contact KAC with questions.

Additional Resources

For daily information on things happening in the Legislature, follow @KansasCounties and @JayHallKS on Twitter.

You can find information on the Kansas Legislature, such as daily calendars, audio links, and bill text at www.kslegislature.org. With most activities happening via technology due to COVID-19, you can watch

or listen to committee proceedings at www.sg001-harmony.sliq.net/00287/Harmony/en/View/Calendar/
or by following the Kansas Legislature on YouTube.

2021 Legislative deadlines can be found at:

www.kslegislature.org/li/documents/2021_anticipated_deadlines.pdf