



Legislative Update January 24, 2020

Welcome to the 2020 Kansas Legislative Session. This is the second year of the biennium, so bills and resolutions from the 2019 Session carried over to the 2020 Session. As a result, the bill numbers will not start over at 1 and 2001, but will pick up where they left off last session. Additionally, bills that “died” in committee last year have been revived and are available for debate.

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 2019 session can be found at www.kslegresearch.org under the Publications tab by searching the 2019 Summary of Legislation and 2019 Legislative Highlights.

What Happened this Week

The 2020 Session is off to a quick start over the first two weeks. The two big items on the agenda are Medicaid Expansion and a Constitutional Amendment concerning abortion.

The session actually started a few days early, as Governor Kelly and Senate Majority Leader Denning held a joint press conference on January 9, 2020 to announce a preliminary agreement on a senate bill for Medicaid Expansion. This was a major announcement because, as you may recall, the Medicaid Expansion debate held up last year’s budget for about 24 hours. Addressing this early in the session could mean fewer delays later on. To that end, SB 252 has been introduced, with several days of hearings scheduled for the early part of the session. The other practical effect of addressing this now is that while Medicaid Expansion is holding hearings and working its way through the process, not much else can get done, effectively bottlenecking the entire legislative process, except...

The House and Senate have also been debating a Constitutional Amendment concerning abortion. While the KAC takes no position on the amendment itself, the timing of the amendment vote (presuming it passes both the House and Senate) is important to counties, as county election offices will be responsible for administering the election whether it happens during the primary in August, or during the general election in November. Keep an eye on the timing of this vote, as it could have an effect on county clerk and elections offices across the state.

Hearings have also taken place on a number of bills related to county appraisers in the Senate Assessment and Taxation committee. The committee has taken a keen interest on the issue of property taxes, and has focused particularly on the role of appraisers. Three bills – SBs 263, 264, and 266 were heard this week. Each of those bills was newly introduced this legislative session, and each deals with some aspect of property tax law, with two focused specifically on appraisers. KAC has taken a neutral position on SB 263, which allows property tax notifications

to be sent electronically, provided that the recipient agrees to receive those notices electronically. However, KAC testified in opposition to SB 264 and SB 266. SB 264 would allow the state to remove an appraiser who was terminated from a county from the approved list. While KAC strongly supports ensuring that all individuals holding county positions are qualified, it is important that the hiring decisions in counties are made at the county level. KAC oppose SB 266, a bill that would change the educational requirements for appraisers because any change to the educational requirements should be done thoughtfully and carefully after studying the available education and certification in the field.

What's Coming Next Week

Next week, there will be a hearing on HB 2461, which proposes to restrict the ability of local governments, including counties, to enter into contracts for legal services on a contingency fee basis. This would effectively prevent local governments from joining class action lawsuits, which are generally done on a contingent fee basis, among other types of litigation. KAC will oppose this restriction on local control. That hearing will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 3:30 PM in the House Judiciary Committee in Room 346-S. Anyone interested in submitting testimony must do so no later than Tuesday in order to be listed on the agenda.

KAC is also continuing to track several provisions in Senate Tax. Next week there are hearings on SB 272 and 273. SB 272 would prevent any increase in property value on appeals to BOTA. SB 273 would allow taxpayers to attend BOTA hearings through audio or visual technology. KAC will oppose SB 272. The purpose of the BOTA hearing is to establish the correct value, whether that is an increase or decrease. KAC will support SB 273 as a way to increase convenience and accessibility in the BOTA process, so long as counties are also allowed to appear via technology. Those hearings will take place in Senate Tax on Wednesday, January 29 at 9:30 AM in Room 548-S. Testimony will be due on Tuesday.

HB 2445, which would allow runaway children to be placed in a juvenile detention facility for 24 hours will be heard in Corrections and Juvenile Justice on Tuesday, January 28 at 1:30 PM in Room 152-S. Testimony will be due on Monday.

SB 293, which would remove the prosecutorial powers for election crimes from the secretary of state's office will be heard in the Senate Judiciary committee on Thursday, January 30 at 10:30 AM in Room 346-S. Testimony will be due on Wednesday.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of all hearings next week, and that all committee agendas are subject to change.

If you want to submit testimony on any bill, but cannot deliver it, I can do that for you. Please send it to me in PDF format no later than 8:30 AM on the day before the hearing (for Monday hearings, that means Friday morning) so that I can deliver it on your behalf. When you send it, please indicate whether you would like to appear in person to speak at the hearing as well. As always, if you have questions, feel free to email or call.

Additionally, please watch for email blasts from KAC for important hearings that have been added to the calendar, and please watch your individual affiliate and associate groups for discussion on bills that relate directly to your county office.

Other Resources

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

You can find information on the Kansas Legislature, such as daily calendars, audio links and bill text at www.kslegislature.org

2019 Legislative deadlines can be found at www.kslegislature.org/li/documents/2019_deadlines_text.pdf