

Legislative Updates

Rep. Barrett meets with BHS government class

Week seven was significantly lighter than the last week (turnaround week). This was due to Senate bills still being assigned to their respective House committees so hearings can be set up, and both proponents and opponents can express their views. Below is a review of a few select bills of interest that had some type of action.

**HB 2396 (Property Tax Relief Bill):** Property tax relief continues to be the most important issue for Kansans, which is why there are numerous proposals working their way through the legislature. I've covered many of these proposals already in previous newsletters, which you can view in my newsletter section at [vote4barrett.com](http://vote4barrett.com). The newest proposal that is getting a hearing this week is HB 2396, which empowers taxpayers to challenge excessive property tax increases through a protest petition process. If a local government raises taxes beyond a set limit, citizens have 30 days to gather signatures and force a rollback. Proponents state that the bill

prevents municipalities from taxing first and budgeting later, ensuring they justify spending increases. It also establishes the AS-TRA Fund to help cities and counties maintain services without unnecessary tax hikes. (The hearing took place at 3:30 p.m. March 4. You can watch the hearing after the fact on the Kansas Legislature YouTube page.)

**Senate Bill 4 (Repealing 3-Day Grace Period for Mail Ballots):** SB 4 was approved by the House, which requires all advance voting ballots to be received by 7 p.m. on Election Day to be counted, eliminating the current three-day grace period, which was enacted in 2017. This change aligns Kansas with most other states, ensuring a fair and transparent election process with clear deadlines. The bill prevents election delays, reduces post-election uncertainty, and eliminates reliance on inconsistent USPS postmarking, which is an issue that has been in the news after Secretary Scott Schwab found that the USPS didn't properly mark/handle ballots.

**HB 2291 (Regulatory Sandbox and Relief):** HB 2291 was approved by the House last week, and is currently in the Senate. HB 2291 creates a Regulatory Relief Division within

the Attorney General's office to help businesses challenge excessive regulations. It also establishes a sandbox program, allowing startups to test new products without immediate regulatory burdens, promoting innovation and economic growth. The bill ensures fairness through a bipartisan oversight committee while preventing unelected officials from stifling businesses. By reducing red tape, HB 2291 positions Kansas as a leader in free-market policies, making the state more business-friendly. This type of program has already been successfully implemented in states such as Utah.

**Local Government Class Visits the State Capitol:** This last week, the Burlington High School Senior Government Class, along with three eighth graders who served as pages, visited the State Capitol. Senator Tyson and I had the privilege of meeting with the class to discuss the legislative process. Additionally, I took the three eighth grade pages to the Lieutenant Governor's office, where they met the Lieutenant Governor and had their photo taken.

Thank you for trusting me to serve you in the Kansas Legislature. Please reach out with any questions or comments.

Committees working on bills after turnaround

(Feb. 28) — After turnaround (the halfway point in session), most of the work is happening in committees.



Caryn Tyson  
State Senator  
12th District

Stopping State Benefits to Illegal Aliens, including in-state tuition, Senate Bill (SB) 254, drew a crowd for the committee hearing. There was one proponent and over 20 opponents that wanted to speak about the bill. The committee rules allow each side to speak the same amount of time. Since the proponents only had one person speaking, AG Kobach spoke for several minutes. The opponents (those who want benefits for illegals) were told that not all of them would get to speak, especially since there were so many of them and the first speakers used up a good portion of the time. After time was called, one of the opponents started yelling and demeaning the committee and the process. The Highway Patrol was called to escort him out of the room and the meeting was adjourned. Thankfully, this is extremely rare, and most people respect the rules and the decorum at our Capitol. The committee will work on the bill in the next week or two.

U.S. Constitution Article

Deadline

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(Monique Hart), Position 6 (Lucas Allen), Position 1\* (to fill the unexpired term).

**LeRoy-Gridley USD 245:** Dist. 2 — three board members (Craig Nickel, Johannah Snovelle, Heather Hill)

**Southern Lyon County USD 252:** Position 2 (Ryan Gasche), Position 3 (Melissa Carson), Position 6 (Timothy Bailey).

**Anderson County USD 365:** Position 4 (Michael Richards), Position 5 (Sonya Martin), Position 6 (Gina Witherspoon).

**Lakeview Drainage District (Nov. 4 election)** District board members (Greg Gleue, Michael R. Houston, Arlin Meats).

County

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approved the following motions:

➤ Awarding an \$89,216.96 bid for assorted culvert pipes to Contech Engineered Solutions.

➤ Designating April 14-19 as Spring Clean-Up Week, with the County Clerk publishing the notice.

➤ Soliciting sealed bids for: Approximately 100 miles of highway paint striping (\$2501-C); Seasonal mowing at Old 50 Park, Rock Creek Cemetery, Hope Cemetery, and Strawn Monument (16th & Fauna); Seasonal mowing at Jacob's Creek Lagoons.

Additionally, the commission approved step increases for two heavy equipment operators who completed their probationary periods: Joshua Bruckner, wage increase from \$20.89 to \$21.28 (effective February 19); and Nathan Doerr, wage increase from \$21.68 to \$22.07 (effective February 26).

**Executive Sessions**  
The commission en-

tered multiple executive sessions:

✕ 40-minute and 20-minute sessions: Interviewing a candidate for the economic development director position, attended by County Counselor Bowie, Interim Economic Development Director Ronda Truelove, and the applicant.

✕ 10-minute session: Including Bowie, to discuss the applicant, under the personnel matters of non-elected personnel exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA).

✕ 5-minute session: Reviewing a legal document with Bowie, under the attorney-client privilege exception.

✕ 10-minute session: Reviewing a contract document with Bowie, related to Marie Belle's, under attorney-client privilege.

No action was taken following these executive sessions.

Miscellaneous Business

**Public Hearing Postponed:** A 10 a.m. hearing on minimum maintenance roads in the northeast quarter of the county

Program

Continued from Page 2A

their loved ones," Leslea Rockers, Executive Director for East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging, said.

Caregivers can apply for K-RAD funds to cover respite care costs. More information is available on the KDADS website, and applications can be obtained through local Area Agencies on Aging or by contacting the Aging and

Disability Resource Center at 1-855-200-2372.

Additionally, KDADS has introduced the Kansas Dementia Roadmap: A Guide for People Impacted by Dementia. This resource acknowledges that caring for someone with memory loss or dementia is a long and unpredictable journey. The Roadmap provides essential guidance, support, and information for families, helping them navigate the challenges of dementia care.

"This roadmap will help families navigate their de-

was rescheduled to March 10.

**Funding Source Adjustments:** The commission rescinded three prior motions and reapproved them with funding from the General Fund — Community Improvement Line, affecting:

◆ Concrete replacement west of the courthouse.

◆ Roof replacement at 405-407 Neosho (formerly Marie Belle's).

◆ Coffey County Health Department remodel (\$389,000 contract; \$277,120.67 from the CARES Act Fund, remainder from General Fund — Community Improvement Line).

Additionally, the commission authorized the chairman to sign a memorandum to department heads regarding Form CP-5 for one-step movement, and a contract with Lumineo Signs for installing new poly-metal panels with digitally printed graphics at the county sign south of Coffey County Airport (\$7,950).

Before adjourning, commissioners reviewed and signed February vouchers and warrants.

mementia journey so that they won't become lost in the diagnosis," Jamie Gideon, Kansas Director of Public Policy for the Alzheimer's Association, said.

Printed copies of the Kansas Dementia Roadmap are available at local Area Agency on Aging and Alzheimer's Association offices. A downloadable version is also available at <https://www.kdads.ks.gov/services-programs/aging/alzheimer-s-disease-and-dementia/kansas-dementia-roadmap>.

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