Payment for partial U.S. Senate recount 'raises serious concerns'

TIM CARPENTER
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — Secretary of State Scott Schwab sounded an alarm about the source of funding for a partial recount of U.S. Senate votes for a Wichita activist who previously made unsubstantiated allegations of election fraud in Kansas.

Schwab said in a statement Thursday the source of $47,500 to pay for the hand counts in three urban counties "raises serious concerns about potential violations of federal campaign finance restrictions." His statement indicated misconduct could involve contributions from impermissible sources or an attempt to bypass federal campaign donation limits.

Schwab, who leaves office in January, said he would refer information to the Federal Election Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice "for review and any appropriate action." He said the Kansas Secretary of State's Office has no authority to enforce federal campaign law.

The request for a targeted recount of ballots in 60 precincts was submitted by David Graham, the Libertarian Party candidate for U.S. Senate. In the Nov. 3 election, Graham received 3% of the vote in an contest won by Democrat Adam Hamilton, who was the first Democrat from Kansas elected to the U.S. Senate since the 1930s. Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Roger Marshall was defeated.

Schwab said Graham made the request Tuesday for tabulation of 23 precincts in Johnson County, 21 in Shawnee County and 16 in Wyandotte County.

The secretary of state's office said Graham sought the recount for the "sole purpose" of assisting "Beth Clarkson with her academic research." Graham didn't cast doubt on accuracy of precinct vote totals, Schwab said.

Clarkson has championed election fraud conspiracies in Kansas for more than a decade. She leads a state-registered corporation, Show Me the Votes Foundation, that was founded in 2015.

On Thursday, a $47,548 cashier's check drawn on the Show Me the Votes Foundation's bank account — not Graham's campaign account — was submitted to the Secretary of State's Office to pay for the recounts. The source of the funds provided to the foundation hasn't been disclosed, Schwab said.

Schwab authorized the three counties to begin the recounts, which could extend into the weekend. The secretary of state has repeatedly said over the years that Kansas has fair and accurate elections.

Under state law, the recount bond payment had to be made upfront because the U.S. Senate margin of victory for Hamilton exceeded 0.5%. He received 51% of the vote to Marshall's 46%.

Clarkson said on Friday that she had asked the secretary of state for access to the state's recount results, but didn't receive a reply. She said the threat of an investigation into possible campaign finance violations was a surprise because she raised the money and made the payment to the secretary of state and not Graham.

"I don't understand how this could be considered a campaign contribution," she said. "It was solely for my research purposes. Not to assist his campaign."

Clarkson, who earned a doctorate in mathematics, has worked as a statistician for Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research. She was responsible for claims under the Kansas Open Records Act from 2013 to 2018 that sought audit tapes of Sedgwick County voting machines.

She sought the information to investigate what she described as statistical anomalies in election returns. Kansas courts rejected Clarkson's approach and ruled private citizens couldn't have access to election records for independent auditing of results.

In an online column posted in October 2017, Clarkson wrote about her growing concern with the accuracy of voting machines. She explained how she joined volunteers to conduct an election audit through exit polling at five south-central Kansas locations in the November 2016 election.

"I'm afraid that the evidence from those exit polls point overwhelmingly to our voting machines being manipulated," she said. "Not by enough to alter any outcomes in the races studied — the maximum deviation between our exit polls and the official results was less than 5% in suspect races. But still extremely troubling to me as a voting citizen of Kansas."

Clarkson said "scattered anomalies" were likely related to process flaws rather than malicious intent, but comparing exit polling with published results "indicate that the election results might have been compromised."

In the 2016 presidential race won by Republican Donald Trump against Democrat Hillary Clinton, Clarkson said votes appeared to have shifted from Clinton to Trump in four of the five exit polling locations. In Wellington, the fifth site, she said "substantial errors" pushed the vote in Clinton's favor.

"This looks like malicious tampering of the results by at least two different parties with opposite intentions," she said.

Former foster parents' attitudes sour toward Kansas child welfare system

ANNA KAMINSKI
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — Kansas foster care parents who left the system described themselves in 2022 as "glorified babysitters" and pointed to a lack of respect from the state's foster care agency.

A year later, the Legislature passed the Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights, which attempted, in part, to establish caregivers as primary members of a foster care team.

But a 2026 survey of former foster care parents found "an alarming rise" in perceptions of institutional pushback and retaliation.

The state Office of the Child Advocate presented this year's survey results Tuesday at a joint bipartisan child welfare committee meeting, where lawmakers discussed priorities ahead of the upcoming 2027 legislative session.

Kansas lost roughly 1,000 licensed foster homes between 2020 and 2025, according to data from Who Cares, a national count of foster homes and families. The number of youths in care has decreased during that time, too, from more than 7,200 to 5,600.

"Parents didn't leave because they stopped caring about kids," said Brook Town, the lead case investigative analyst for the child advocate office. "They left because the system made it too hard for them to stay."

More than 51% of survey respondents said they didn't feel valued as members of their foster child's planning team. More than 31% reported experiencing retaliation from the child welfare system. In 2022, only 18% of respondents said the same.

The office sent the survey this summer to more than 1,000 former foster parents, and 312 responded, which was about half of the number of parents the office surveyed in 2022.

Town likened the child welfare system to a vehicle in need of maintenance.

"That foster parent attrition is kind of like that check engine light," Town said. "It tells us something is going on, but where is it?"

This year's respondents said inadequate communication, training and flexibility needed improvement. Town pointed to survey results that indicated quick turnover rates early on. Roughly 60% of homes closed within three years. More than 20% of homes closed within the first year.

Parents said in the survey they felt unequipped to deal with foster children's trauma. More than 51% said initial foster care training adequately prepared them for a foster child, which was a 10-percentage-point drop from 2022.

More than 100 respondents cited unresolved conflict or lack of agency support as a direct cause of closing their homes to foster children.

"I think this report is very telling, and we need to be able to listen," said Sen. Beverly Gossage, a Eudora Republican.

The full report is expected to be available Friday.

New bird flu cases appear in dairy herds as officials seek vaccine urgency

NADA HASSANEIN
Kansas Reflector

More states are seeing new cases of bird flu in cattle as state agricultural officials urge the federal government to prioritize approving vaccines for dairy cows.

The virus, highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1, known commonly as bird flu, has been affecting poultry flocks for years. But in 2024, it was first detected in cows. Epidemiologists think cows initially it via wild birds, and that the virus continued to spread between cattle via and transporting of asymptomatic dairy cattle.

While cases peaked in 2024, states are still seeing new infections in cattle this year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reported that there are cases in states this year that previously hadn't seen infections among dairy herds: Last Saturday, Oklahoma saw its first case since the outbreaks among cows began that year, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Oregon also detected its first diagnosis at a dairy herd last week, as did Indiana, earlier this month, bringing the total number of states where the virus has been detected in dairy cattle to 22.

Colorado, Idaho, Texas and Washington state have also reported cases among cattle over the past month.

This year so far, there have been at least 146 dairy cattle infected with the virus, with more than 1,200 cases among cattle since the outbreak began.

On Nov. 6, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, which represents agricultural officials across all 50 states, and the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, wrote a letter to the USDA urging the agency to prioritize developing an emergency vaccination framework for cows, "to take additional action to control and ultimately eradicate" the virus in dairy cattle. Cattle can develop short-lived immunity to the virus but can get re-infected, the groups wrote.

The USDA says it supports rapid development and timely approval of a vaccine for dairy cattle, and several are undergoing field trials or awaiting final approval for emergency use. Developing and approving a vaccine has its own regulatory structure, and that can make for slow testing and implementation.

Bird flu in livestock "poses an urgent threat to public and animal health, national agricultural stability, international market access, and the economic viability of the dairy and poultry industries across the U.S.," the associations wrote. "… Without a proactive, coordinated eradication strategy, H5N1 risks becoming an endemic disease in U.S. dairy cattle, requiring USDA, State Animal Health Officials and industry to manage the disease for years while continuing to respond to costly spillover events in poultry."

The risk to humans and the general public is low, but dairy workers who work closely with herds are at highest risk. Washington state has seen roughly three dozen new cases among cattle over the past month, and one dairy worker there died earlier this month, bringing the total deaths among humans contracting the virus to three nationwide.

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NEOSHO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NEOSHO COUNTY, KANSAS

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Notice is hereby given that sealed proposals for the construction of a bridge replacement project in Neosho County, State of Kansas, said work known as Bridge Replacement of Br. No. 42.5-17.6, KDOT Project No. 67 C-5387-01, will be received at the Neosho County Courthouse located at 100 South Main, Erie, KS 66733 **in the County Commission Chambers** until December 1, 2026 at 1:30 P.M. and then publicly opened.

The project to be constructed is briefly described as follows:
Bridge:
Construct 94'-100'-66' Prestressed Beam Spans, 26'-0" Roadway, 30 Deg. Skew Rt.

Grading:
1,431 CY Common Excavation, 7,441 C.Y. Compaction of Earthwork

GUARANTY REQUIRED: Each proposal must be accompanied by a certified check, cashier's check on a solvent bank or a bid bond executed by corporations authorized to contact as surety in the State of Kansas and made payable to Neosho County, as a guarantee that if awarded the contract, the bidder will enter into a contract and give bond as required. The amount shown should read "Five Percent (5%) of the amount bid."

Bridge and Grading Work shall be awarded to the same contractor.

OTHER SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: No bidder may withdraw his bid for a period of thirty (30) days after the date of opening bids.

Further information on the work to be done may be obtained by an examination of the plans and specifications on file in the office of the County Clerk of Neosho County or in the office of the Road & Bridge Director.

Contract Documents may be obtained from Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers, P.A., 2930 SW Woodside Drive, Topeka, Kansas 66614, upon payment of a deposit of $60.00. ***There will be no refund of the deposit. The project manual and plans become the property of the prospective bidder and are not returnable.*** Copies of the project manual and plans are on file and open for public inspection at the office from which they may be obtained.

All bidders must be prequalified with the Kansas Department of Transportation for the type and amount of work covered under this contract.

The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any or all technicalities.

BY ORDER OF THE NEOSHO COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Gail Klaassen
Chairman

Nov. 10, 17, 24


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LEGAL

(First published in The Chanute Tribune Tuesday, November 17, 2026)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF NEOSHO COUNTY, KANSAS
CIVIL COURT DEPARTMENT

FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION
Plaintiff,
vs.
JOHN E WOODS, TRACY DEANN WOODS, JOHN DOE (UNKNOWN TENANT/OCCUPANT), JANE DOE (UNKNOWN TENANT/OCCUPANT), ET AL.
Defendants.

Case No.: NOC-2026-CV-000087
Division No.:
Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 60
Title to Real Estate Involved

NOTICE OF SUIT

THE STATE OF KANSAS, to the above-named defendants and the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors and assigns of any deceased defendants; the unknown spouses of any defendants; the unknown officers, successor trustees, creditors and assigns of any defendants that are existing, dissolved or dormant corporations; the unknown executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors, successors and assigns of any defendants that are or were partners or in partnership; the unknown guardians, conservators and trustees of any defendants that are minors or are under any legal disability; and the unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees, creditors and assigns of any person alleged to be deceased and all other persons who are or may be concerned.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that a Petition has been filed in the District Court of Neosho County, Kansas, praying to foreclose a real estate mortgage on the following described real estate:

LOT 2, BLOCK 3, WARDS FIRST ADDITION TO THE CITY OF CHANUTE, NEOSHO COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 507 W 7th St, Chanute, KS 66720 ("Property")

and all those defendants who have not otherwise been served are required to plead to the Petition on or before December 28, 2026, in the District Court of Neosho County, Kansas. If you fail to plead, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the Petition.

NOTICE

Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(b), no information concerning the collection of this debt may be given without the prior consent of the consumer given directly to the debt collector or the express permission of a court of competent jurisdiction. The debt collector is attempting to collect a debt and any information will be used for that purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
MARINOSCI LAW GROUP, P.C.
/s/ David V. Noyce
David V. Noyce, #20870
11111 Nall Avenue, Suite 104
Leawood, KS 66211
dnoyce@mlg-defaultlaw.com
Phone: (913) 800-2021
Fax: (913) 257-5223
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF

Nov. 17, 24; Dec. 1