

IN THE HOUSE: Representative Kristey Williams, 77th District

Legislative Update – Week One

Content provided by Speaker's Office

January 11 – 15, 2021

WEEK 1

The House is taking a pragmatic approach to social distancing, good hand-washing practices, encouraging the use of masks and making testing widely available to help prevent the transmission of Covid-19. All of these measures will help ensure the Legislature can continue to work and conduct the people's business throughout the Session. There is important work to be done, like helping our economy rebound, protecting local control in times of disaster, and passing the Value Them Both amendment. We are working diligently to make sure Covid does not harm our ability to accomplish the things that need to be done in order to move our state forward.

Protecting Life: Value Them Both

For generations, Kansans have valued the sanctity of life. But, recent court decisions (*Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt*) have jeopardized the laws Kansans have put in place to protect life and the safety of mothers. The "Value Them Both" Amendment would give Kansans the right to vote on whether they believe the state should be able to regulate abortion procedures and prohibit taxpayer dollars from being used to pay for abortions. This Constitutional Amendment would be placed on the ballot so that voters can decide whether Kansas should continue to be a pro-life state or not. This week the House Federal and State Affairs Committee heard testimony on the Value Them Both Amendment. The next step will be for the committee to decide whether to advance the amendment to the full House for consideration.

Bottom line: Kansans should have the right to decide whether Kansas is a pro-life state or not.

Republicans Respond to the State of the State Address

There was a great deal in the Governor's State of the State speech about the Kansas economy. But, the data shows the Governor's administration is not keeping pace on Kansas with other states by most any economic measure.

The Governor talked a lot about vaccines, unemployment and the economy. But actions speak louder than words. On Laura Kelly's watch, our state lags behind in vaccinations, hasn't been able to deliver benefits to unemployed Kansans, and has fallen behind other states in economic growth. Kansans are tired of excuses and ready for action," said Speaker Ron Ryckman.

Senate President Ty Masterson delivered the Republican response to the State of the State this year. His remarks included: "We will be able to emerge from these challenges stronger than ever before because of the hard work and sacrifice of Kansans and their willingness to come together to help their neighbors and their communities."

Watch his response on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUdlixOVQ08>

Governor's Budget Gimmicks

The Governor claimed to be proposing a balanced budget, but has yet to submit a budget to the legislature that does not rely on smoke and mirrors. She has repeatedly attempted to jeopardize the health of our state's pension system in order to fund short-term spending. It appears she will push for the same tactic again this year, which only kicks the can down the road, leaving our next generation to pick up the tab.

The Governor's method of "balancing the budget" relies on the usual tricks and gimmicks, such as:

- Allotments to several important evidence-based programs, including \$9 million from our technical & college colleges, \$9 million from waivers for Kansans with disabilities, \$5 million from school safety & security, and delaying payments to our K-12 schools
- Reamortizing the KPERS pension plan, which will increase taxpayer debt by \$4.6 billion
- Delaying \$132 million in debt payments
- Taking almost \$200 million from KDOT
- Taking \$82 million from our Rainy Day Fund

You can find more details on the Governor's Budget Report [online](#).

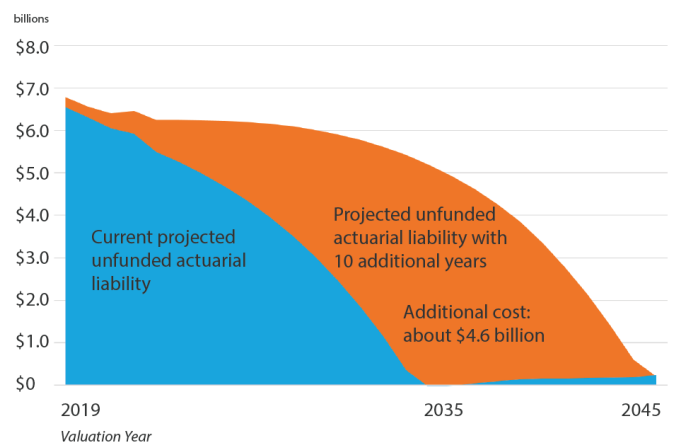
Bottom line: The governor's economic policies have hurt Kansans, and she wants to deliver more of the same.

KPERS Reamortization: Kicking the Can Down the Road

This year marks the Governor's *third* attempt to reamortize KPERS. The Governor's proposal would cost taxpayers an additional \$4.6 billion. Yet, this KPERS refinance is the cornerstone of the Governor's budget proposal and is yet another attempt to balance the budget on the backs of retirees and current state employees. The plan simply kicks the can down the road, pushing back the timeline for fully funding KPERS by 10 years and leaving our children and grandchildren to pay the extra \$4.6 billion in debt in order to fund the Governor's increased spending today. That's why a bipartisan coalition in the Kansas House has twice voted down the Governor's attempt with a 36-87 vote in 2019 ([2019 HB 2197](#)) and a 125-0 vote in 2020 ([2020 HB 2503](#)).

Bottom line: It is fiscally irresponsible for the state to increase taxpayer debt and to fail to fund the pension system that Kansas retirees have paid into.

How Adding 10 Years Affects the Unfunded Actuarial Liability



Governor Proposes Netflix and Digital Streaming Tax

The governor's proposal calls for requiring a tax on digital sales, along with having marketplace facilitators collect sales tax. The governor has proposed a \$42.7 million tax increase on digital property and streaming services and \$43.1 million for marketplace facilitator, totaling \$85.8 million in increased taxes. The governor did not propose an offset to another tax to take the burden off taxpayers.

Last year, this same proposal had estimates of \$25 million SGF for digital property and \$22.4 million SGF for marketplace facilitators. In 2020, the governor also proposed food sales tax relief and property tax relief. Neither was included in this year's budget submission.

REMINDER OF DATES

Monday, January 18 th	Martin Luther King Day, No Session
Friday, January 29 th	Kansas Day
Monday, February 1 st	Last day of members to request bill drafts from the Revisor's Office
Monday, February 8 th	Last day for non-exempt Committees to request bill drafts from Revisor's Office. This is the last day requests for introduction can be on non-exempt Committee agendas
Wednesday, February 10 th	Last day for individuals to introduce bills in house of origin. Bills must be submitted to chamber staff during daily session for introduction
Friday, February 12 th	Last day for non-exempt Committees to introduce bills in originating chamber. Bills must be submitted to chamber staff during daily session for introduction
Friday, February 26 th	Last day for non-exempt committees to meet
Friday, March 5 th	<u>Turnaround</u> – Last day to consider non-exempt bills in house of origin
Friday, March 26 th	Last day for non-exempt committees to meet
Wednesday, March 31 st	Last day to consider non-exempt bills in either house
Friday, April 9 th	<u>First Adjournment</u>
Monday, May 3 rd	Veto Session begins

“The opportunist thinks of me and today. The statesman thinks of us and tomorrow.”

-Dwight D. Eisenhower