



Community Bankers Association of Kansas

Kansas Legislative and Policy Report

August Legislative Update

September 3, 2024

Overview

Between primary election season and legislative happenings around the Kansas Statehouse, August has been a busy month in Topeka. Summer is nearing its end, and so too the summer pace of activities. From now until November 5th, incumbents and candidates will be busy campaigning ahead of the General Election. Legislative leadership will focus its time on supporting candidates, with Republicans eager to hold on to their supermajority and Democrats hopeful to pick up a few seats in order to break it.

Other August Highlights

Special Committee on Budget Process & Development

- The Legislative Coordinating Council, comprised of legislative leadership, approved the Special Committee on Budget Process and Development. The Committee held its first meeting last week and is exploring ways to expedite the state budget process. Specifically, the Committee, and legislative leadership, are interested in allowing the Legislature to access preliminary budget information, not just the Governor, and to begin crafting a budget bill. The Committee believes a legislature-initiated budget allows for a faster budget process when the Governor presents their budget and recommendations in early January. They want to begin review and analysis in the final months leading up to the session.
- The Committee is considering a few different proposals, such as alternating which state agency budgets each chamber is responsible for in a given year; allowing the Legislative Budget Committee to meet throughout the fall to review and assemble a budget that is ready to be worked at the beginning of Session; as well as using the previous year's budget as the base budget for the following year.
- The Committee has not made any definitive decisions about changing the process yet, but it meets again in late September to continue discuss and decide more firmly what a legislative-led budget process might look like going into the 2025 Session. It is unclear what exactly that will look like, given it is an election year and many new legislators will not be sworn in until January 2025 and thus will not yet have a say in state agency budget requests and formulation until 2025. There was some interest in beginning the process this fall for the 2025 session but that's ambitious.
- Additionally, several lawmakers on the Committee expressed an interest in getting back to a true five-day workweek during the Session, since the Legislature often works bills on the floor Tuesday through Thursday, and Mondays and Fridays are pro forma, with little getting done, particularly on Fridays.

- All that to say, the pace of putting together the state budget in 2025 and going forward has the potential to look quite different.

Interim Committee Assignments Finalized

- The committee assignments for all of the special committees have now been finalized and can be found at the following links. As a reminder, many of these committees will not convene until after the General Election in November.
 - Special Committee on Centralized Pooled Collateral and PMIB Modernization: https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_spc_2024_on_pmib_modern_1/
 - The dates for this Committee have not yet been set but will likely happen after the General Election.
 - Special Committee on Available and Affordable Housing: https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_spc_2024_on_housing_1/
 - Special Committee on Budget Process and Development: https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_spc_2024_on_bdgt_and_dev_1/
 - Special Committee on Medical Marijuana: https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_spc_2024_on_marijuana_1/
- The current schedule of interim committee meetings can be found here (listed as grid calendar) and is usually updated weekly on the Kansas Legislative Research Department's website: <https://klrd.gov/committees/>

Primary Election Takeaways

- The Kansas Secretary of State's Office has finished certifying all of the election results. The Office also reported a much lower-than-anticipated voter turnout rate for the primary, at just 16.9 percent (it was expected to be closer to 24 percent). However, the Secretary of State's Office anticipates this will not be the case in November, and that many more Kansans will turn out to vote in the General.
- Here are a few highlights from the primary:
- Two longtime members of the Kansas legislature will not return after losing their primaries. The most surprising was that of current House Minority Leader Vic Miller, D-Topeka, who was vying for the Senate District 19 seat. Miller was defeated by newcomer Patrick Schmidt who had the backing of Governor Laura Kelly late in the race. Schmidt defeated Miller and Sims with 54% of the vote in the 3-way primary. Schmidt faces Tyler Wible in November.
- Craig Bowser, R-Holton, won a 3-way primary defeating long-time Senator Dennis Pyle, R-Hiawatha, and current House member Dr. John Eplee, R-Atchison. There is no general election opponent. Pyle was first elected to the Legislature in 2001 and in recent years had regularly clashed with Senate leadership on various policies, most notably tax relief.
- Longtime Lawrence-area Senator Marci Francisco defeated Representative Christina Haswood and will return to the Senate for a 6th term. Haswood served two terms in the Kansas House.
- The official list of primary race outcomes can be found here: <https://sos.ks.gov/elections/24elec/2024-Primary-Official-Vote-Totals.pdf>

Looking Ahead to November

- Here are a few facts and figures to keep in mind for the general election as they relate to Kansas specifically.
- There are 73 contested races for the Kansas House. Fifty-two candidates have no opponents (33 Republicans and 19 Democrats).

- Johnson County will be key—in both chambers—for determining whether Republicans retain their supermajority, or Democrats can claim a couple of Republican-held districts. A handful of races in Johnson County, particularly on the House side, were decided in 2022 with fewer than 100 votes. In the Senate, ten Republicans currently hold seats in districts that Governor Kelly won in 2022. Those will be races to watch.
- Out of 40 Senate seats, only nine are uncontested, six of which are Republican.

Upcoming Activities

Wednesday, September 4th. 9:00 AM.

Legislative Budget Committee.

- Agenda :
https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte_leg_budget_1/documents/agenda/weeklyinterim/20240904.pdf
- Includes updates on Department of Commerce projects, rural housing updates, etc.

Wednesday, October 16th. Time TBD.

Special Committee on Medical Marijuana.

Monday, October 28th. Time TBD.

Special Committee on Medical Marijuana.

Wrap Up

Let us know if you have any questions.

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