



KHA's Capitol Comments
January 16, 2025

State of the State and Response Delivered to Kansans

During the Kansas State of the State address, Gov. Laura Kelly highlighted successes, including:

- Fully funded public schools
- A balanced state budget
- Paying down debt
- Bringing in significant economic development investments
- Eliminating the tax on groceries

The governor emphasized the need for KanCare expansion, highlighting that not expanding has cost the state \$280 million in Kansas taxpayer dollars. The governor also discussed a proposal to eliminate co-payments on reduced-price lunches for school children and combine water-related efforts to create an Office of Natural Resources.

Gov. Kelly would like to postpone further tax reductions until the state realizes the impact of the recent tax changes. However, she is committed to considering proposals to modify our tax structure so that they would pay for themselves and not threaten our state's long-term financial stability.

The governor also emphasized eliminating red tape regarding childcare and again suggested the state needs an Office of Early Childhood.

The Republican pre-recorded response to the State of the State was delivered by Senate President Ty Masterson (R-Andover). He highlighted that many of the matters passed by the legislature were bipartisan. He emphasized the following as priority items:

- Property tax
- Simplifying the tax code and reducing taxes
- Government efficiency
- Foreign land ownership
- School choice
- Right to life
- Gender-affirming care reform

Senate President Masterson also wants to make our state healthy again through reforms such as transparency, more competition and less government regulation while preserving a safety net for the most vulnerable. Highlighting the work done to shorten the KanCare waitlist and increase provider reimbursement rates.

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Hears Updates

Today, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Sen. Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora), heard bill introductions on the right to refuse medications, activities related to public health associated with the power of the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Dental Practice Act.

Next, Secretary Laura Howard gave an update on the division of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services and the agency's legislative agenda, including establishing the Mental Health Intervention Team program in statute, establishing the new South Central Regional Mental Health Hospital in statute, creating a civil monetary penalty and reinvestment fund and program and default to outpatient forensic competency evaluation and restoration services.

Lastly, the committee reviewed recommendations from the Bob Bethell Committee on KanCare Oversight and the Sedation Dentistry Committee.

Budget Committees Hear from Director of Budget

Today, the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committee heard from Division of the Budget Director Adam Proffitt. Director Proffitt highlighted budget components, including \$2.0 million to expand the Kansas Medical Student Loan program, \$2.2 million for the Osteopathic Medical Service Scholarships, Medicaid expansion and additional investments in the Frail/Elderly Waiver, the Brain Injury and Technology Assistance Waiver, \$20 million for Home and Community Based Services Grants, funding for a new Community-Based Services Waiver.

House Health and Human Services Hears Agency Updates from KDHE and KDADS

Today, the House Health and Human Services Committee, chaired by Will Carpenter (R-El Dorado), heard overviews from Secretary Janet Stanek and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The committee will meet again on Tuesday to hear an overview from stakeholder groups, including the Kansas Hospital Association and Kansas Medical Society.

House Higher Education Budget Committee Hears from Board of Healing Arts

Today, the Kansas Board of Healing Arts appeared before the House Higher Education Budget Committee, chaired by Representative Steven Howe (R-Salina). The committee heard the budget overview from the Kansas Legislative Research Staff and then from Executive Director Susan Gile. The committee asked about staffing additions and how they have improved responsiveness. The director suggested the licensing department is staffed sufficiently and indicated additional staffing is needed in the compact area but suggested a need in the disciplinary department. The committee asked if the timeline is the same for Kansas licensure

as in other states. The committee members asked how they could help get new graduates licensed faster.

Also appearing before the committee was the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board. The committee heard the agency budget from the Kansas Legislative Research Staff and Executive Director of BSRB Dave Fye.