



KHA's Capitol Comments
January 22, 2025

Legislative Post Audit Committee Hears from the Department of Commerce

Today, the Legislative Post Audit Committee elected new leadership including Rep. Shannon Francis (R-Liberal) and Vice Chair Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Shawnee) and Sen. Pat Pettey (D-Kansas City) as ranking minority member.

The committee also heard from Joshua Jefferson, deputy secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce. Jefferson received updates on the Promoting Employment Across Kansas, High-Performance Incentive Program, Rural Opportunity Zone and Industrial Manufacturing Training Programs known as KIT-KIR. Jefferson noted the Apprenticeship Act Tax Credit program increased by 47 percent new apprenticeships and moved Kansas from 47th to 29th in apprenticeships across the country.

The committee also heard updates from the agency on the Job Creation Fund, the Angle Investor Tax Credit, STAR bonds, APEX and the Community Services Program.

Senate Ways and Means Hears Broadband Information

Today, the Kansas Senate Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Senator Rick Billinger (R-Goodland), heard updates from the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Department of Commerce and private sector lobbyists regarding broadband expenditures in Kansas.

Rachel Willis with the Kansas Department of Commerce reported the agency has nine current programs with 86 projects totaling \$661.9 million of anticipated funds invested. The nine programs are the Broadband Acceleration Grant Program, Capitol Projects Fund, Lasting Infrastructure and Network Connectivity, Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure, Broadband Equity Access and Deployment, and USDA Broadband Technical Assistance, Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans Program, Advancing Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansans, and the Developing Online Opportunities and Ready Skills Programs.

Cory Davis, director of multimodal transportation and innovation with the Kansas Department of Transportation, gave a presentation on the IKE program broadband acceleration and preservation programs, conduit installation, Middle Mile partnership with the Department of Commerce, and the Dig once strategy taken by the agency in coordinating on project development and engineering.

Megan Bottenberg from Cox Communications appeared before the committee to discuss the growth of the private industry during the past five years, from 92 communities to 119 today.

Erik Sartorius from the Communications Coalition of Kansas expressed there is a feeling of less transparency concerning grant awards. He highlighted one-third of the coalition membership submitted applications for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program and noted barriers with other entities such as railroads.

House Committee on Education Hears About Cardiac Emergency Response

Today, the House Committee on Education, chaired by Representative Susan Estes (R-Wichita), heard updates on Cardiac Emergency Response from Lainey Faulkner, director of the Bureau of Health and Promotions for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The committee heard about the department's development of statewide standards for cardiac emergency response plans. The committee also heard from:

- Kari Rinker, The American Heart Association
- Leah Filter, The Kansas Association of School Boards
- Susan Heegard, Midwestern Higher Education Compact

Introduction of Bills

[Senate Bill 55](#) by the Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance – Concerns property and casualty insurance; prohibits the assignment of benefits therefor; defines such assignment of benefits as an unfair method of competition and unfair or deceptive act or practice

[Senate Bill 63](#) by Committee on Public Health and Welfare – Concerns children and minors; relates to the health care of minors; enacts the Help Not Harm Act; prohibits health care providers from treating a child whose gender identity is inconsistent with the child's sex; authorizes a civil cause of action against health care providers for providing such treatments; restricts the use of state funds to promote gender transitioning; prohibits professional liability insurance from covering damages for health care providers that provide gender transition treatment to children; requires professional discipline against a health care provider who performs such treatments; adds violation of the act to the definition of unprofessional conduct for physicians

[House Bill 2052](#) by the Committee on Federal and State Affairs, requested by Representative Howell – Concerning firearms; relates to the possession thereof; updates cross-references in the Personal and Family Protection Act regarding the eligibility requirements to obtain a license to carry a concealed handgun; requires a license be surrendered to the attorney general upon suspension or revocation of such license; provides for a transition from a provisional license to a standard license; prohibits the collection of personal information of an off-duty law enforcement officer entering buildings while armed or requiring such officer to wear any item identifying such person as a law enforcement officer or being armed

[House Bill 2054](#) by the Committee on Elections, requested by Representative Waggoner – Concerns elections; relates to campaign contribution limits; increases the limits on certain campaign contributions; eliminates such limits on contributions to party committees

[House Bill 2057](#) by the Committee on Elections, requested by Representative Waggoner – Concerns the offices of United States senator, state treasurer and the commissioner of insurance; relates to the filling of vacancies in such offices; requires the appointment of a person of the same political party as the incumbent; requires the legislature to nominate three persons for consideration for such appointment and that the governor appoint one of the nominated persons; establishes the Joint Committee on Vacancy Appointments

[House Bill 2059](#) by the Committee on Taxation, requested by Representative Averkamp – Concerns income taxation; relates to Kansas adjusted gross income; provides a subtraction modification for amounts paid by the taxpayer during the taxable year as a member of a health care sharing ministry