

NEWSLETTERS



KANSAS LEGISLATIVE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER | MAY 26, 2021

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SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT

The 2021 Kansas Legislature adjourned *sine die* Wednesday, May 26. *Sine die* is a Latin term meaning “without day.” Often, *sine die* adjournment is ceremonial without all members attending. This is the final opportunity for the Legislature to override any gubernatorial vetoes from the veto session. There were no successful override efforts.

Last week, Gov. Laura Kelly vetoed two bills and one line item in the budget. Senate Bill 29 would have extended short-term 12-month health insurance coverage to as much as three years. Gov. Kelly called it “junk” insurance which is often used by Kansans without health insurance coverage due to job loss. In her veto message, the governor argued that a better solution would be to expand Medicaid, saying that such expansion would save small businesses money, protect rural hospitals, and inject money into the Kansas economy. Gov. Kelly noted that 38 other states have legislated Medicaid expansion. The Senate overrode the veto 27-11 but the House did not have the necessary votes to override.

Gov. Kelly also vetoed Senate Bill 273, titled The Small Business Relief Act. It was one of the COVID-related bills which would have stripped the oversight of claims from the Governor’s bipartisan task force known as “Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK).” The task force is responsible for distributing about \$1 billion in federal pandemic recovery funds to Kansas business and industry. There were not sufficient votes for an override effort. Wednesday morning, the Kansas Senate and House passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 1616, urging Gov. Kelly to end the pandemic \$300 unemployment benefit.

Senate Republicans selected Sen. Larry Alley, R-Winfield, as the new Senate Majority Leader after the removal of Sen. Gene Suellentrop from the position. Sen. Renee Erickson, R-Wichita, was selected assistant majority leader, replacing Sen. Alley.

Rep. Brett Parker, D-Overland Park, and Rep. Elizabeth Bishop, D-Wichita, have announced they are leaving the Kansas House of Representatives.

REAPPORTIONMENT PROCESS BEGINS

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On May 17, the reapportionment process informally started with preliminary discussions by legislative leaders on when the 2020 U.S. Census data for Kansas would be available to begin reapportioning the state's four Congressional districts. Forty Senate districts and 125 House districts are in play. The 2020 U.S. Census showed Kansas had a population of 2,937,880, a 3% increase from the 2010 Census. State leaders learned that the Census Bureau is not expected to release the precinct-by-precinct breakdowns needed for reapportionment until late August. State leaders discussed the timing of public meetings on reapportionment. There were 12 public hearings in 2011 across the state. Obviously, legislative leaders want to avoid having the courts draw the lines for districts as happened a decade ago.

STATE GOVERNMENT REOPENING

On May 12, Gov. Kelly announced state agencies would be returning to normal operations on June 13. The date matches the payroll period and signals the end of working remotely. On May 13, the CDC announced new guidance regarding mask-wearing for vaccinated Americans. The same day, Gov. Kelly announced that "effective immediately, Kansas will adopt the CDC's latest guidance that fully vaccinated Kansans are no longer required to wear masks indoors or outdoors or physically distance, except in circumstances such as those required by businesses, public transportation, or health care facilities."

On June 1, the Kansas Capitol Building will reopen to the public. On June 2, the Kansas Museum of History will reopen Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Kansas Legislative Insights is a publication developed by the Governmental Relations & Public Policy Law practice group of Foulston Siefkin LLP. It is designed to inform business executives, human resources and governmental relations professionals, and general counsel about current developments occurring in current Kansas legislation. Published regularly during the Kansas legislative session, it focuses on issues involving healthcare, insurance, public finance, taxation, financial institutions, business & economic development, energy, real estate & construction, environmental, agribusiness, employment, and workers compensation. Bill summaries are by necessity brief, however, for additional information on any issue before the Kansas Legislature, contact Foulston Siefkin's Governmental Relations & Public Policy Law practice group leader, James P. Rankin at 785.233.3600 or jrankin@foulston.com. Learn more about the authors below:

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As a partner at Foulston Siefkin, Eddie represents clients in matters before state regulatory commissions, courts, and local governmental bodies. He has built and maintained relationships with key individuals – including lobbyists, elected and appointed officials, and staff members – that prove valuable in advancing clients' interests and issues. Drawing on his experience as a regional governmental affairs attorney for AT&T in Chicago, he helps clients navigate the maze of federal policies and agencies, advises on how processes work in Washington, and provides introductions to those who can help them accomplish their goals.

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PRACTICE AREAS

- Governmental Affairs & Public Policy Law