

“ THE PECK PERSPECTIVE ”

(From the Capitol)

May 6, 2024

After overriding several of Governor Kelly’s vetoes, passing another good tax cut plan (SB 37) for all Kansans, and a largest-in-history state budget (HB 2551), the Kansas Legislature brought the gavel down on the 2024 Session on Tuesday, April 30th. Only the future will reveal just how successful the 2024 Session really was.

Space does not allow for detailing all the successful and failed veto overrides, but there were conservative victories and failures. The Legislature successfully overrode eight bills and failed or didn’t attempt an override on seven others.

Falling Short on Tax Cuts (HB 2036): The most significant failure of the recently concluded veto session was the non-support of three “republican” senators to provide tax cuts for Kansas families and seniors. Although tempted to provide names, I won’t do that here. Suffice it to say, these three will not be returning for the 2025 session.

The veto of HB 2036 was overridden by a super, bipartisan majority of 104–15 in the House, but failed by one vote, 26–14, in the Senate. That vote alone reveals that not only is the election for governor important, but that the makeup of the legislature truly matters. We did assemble a tax cut bill, SB 37, that is similar to, but not as good as, HB 2036. I readily admit that my frustration level with the legislature’s failure, not to mention the governor, to provide tax relief is off-the-charts high. As vice-chair of the Senate Tax Committee, I have invested numerous hours working to accomplish meaningful tax cuts for Kansas families and senior citizens. Stay tuned. We’ll learn in the next few days if SB 37 is vetoed or becomes law.

HB 2098: Overridden by a vote of 37–0 in the Senate and 99–20 in the House. The bill is a tax cutting bill that provides target-specific sales tax exemptions (School for the Deaf, School for the Blind, custom butchering when the animal is provided and consumed by the customer, Kansas Fairgrounds Foundation, and other not-for-profit organizations). HB 2098 also creates a sales tax deduction for certain motor vehicle transactions, reduces the sales tax collected on an item to the amount actually paid when a manufacture’s coupon is used, and, best of all, will allow a sales tax exemption for totally and permanently disabled military veterans – a bill I wrote.

HB 2436: On a 28–10 in the Senate and 85–40 in the House, a good pro-life bill will become law. HB 2436 creates a crime for coercing or compelling a woman to have an abortion when she has expressed her desire to not obtain an abortion.

HB 2749: Overridden 27–10 by the Senate and 84–41 in the House, HB 2749 requires abortion providers to ask pregnant women to pick one of 11 reasons they’re

considering an abortion. Answering the question is strictly voluntary and any answers provided are confidential.

HB 2648: Senate override vote, 27–12 and House 87–38. HB 2648 gives the Legislature oversight of rules and regulations by state agencies, if compliance will cost businesses, individuals, or local governments more than \$1 million in the first 5 years.

HB 2465: By a vote of 29–7 in the Senate and 85–40 in the House, HB 2465 was overridden and will become law. The bill provides a sales tax exemption and income tax credits for contributions made to certain pregnancy resource centers and residential maternity facilities. HB 2465 also enacts the Adoption Savings Account Act and dramatically expands the adoption tax credit.

The other two successful bill overrides were HB 2583, which toughens the penalties for injuring or killing a police dog or horse, and SB 473; regarding notice to appear and appearance bonds made in district courts.

Veto Failures: Among the failed overrides was SB 233. The bill would have protected minors from destructive “gender-affirming” mutilation surgeries, puberty blockers and hormone therapy. The override passed the Senate 27–13 but failed in the House by two votes, 82–43.

Other veto failures: SB 271 – would have stopped government agencies from purchasing drones and other critical components from a “country of concern” (China, North Korea, Iran, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela); HB 2618 – would have disallowed the expenditure of outside money by election officials unless the money was approved by congress or the state legislature; SB 434 – would have allowed “sugaring” (an ancient Egyptian form of hair removal) to be done without licensing by the Board of Cosmetology; HB 2446 would stop local government from creating a patchwork of laws regulating or taxing plastic bottles, plastic or styrofoam cups, plastic, cloth or paper bags, etc.; HB 2614 – concerning delivery of and signatures on advance ballot envelopes and corrupt political advertising; and HB 2532 – would have redirected revenue generated from gambling on historical horse races to the Kansas Horse Breeding Development Fund and the Horse Fair Racing Benefit Fund.

Some are saying the Governor will veto the newest tax cut bill (SB 37) and then call a special session to pass tax cut legislation. All she needs to do is keep her “middle of the road” campaign promise and sign what is on her desk. The most recent bill, SB 37, is not nearly as good as what I want or have voted for in the past, but I’ve been willing to compromise as an attempt to do something good for Kansas taxpayers.

Until next time, may the blessings of God be yours.

Virgil Peck
State Senator