

# THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

April 6, 2026

The Legislature only has three more days scheduled to wrap up the 2026 Legislative Session. There are still issues (bills) legislators hope to finalize, but three days won't allow everything on legislators' wish list to be accomplished.

For me, priority #1 remains property tax relief. It's frustrating that the Senate and House haven't come to an agreement on property tax relief legislation that can garner a supermajority of votes in both chambers. Although prior to first adjournment we passed HB 2745, which would truly help control property taxes (more later), a gubernatorial veto is expected, and the numbers aren't there for a veto override — 27 in the Senate and 84 in the House.

In this article, I'll write about bills I carried on the Senate floor that are on the Governor's desk. All passed by large majorities, so a veto is unlikely.

**Renaming a Portion of Highway 75 (HB 2615):** Currently, much of Hwy 75 through Kansas is designated as the Purple Heart/Combat Wounded Veterans Highway. HB 2615 will redesignate the stretch of Hwy 75 from the Kansas-Oklahoma border north through Caney to the junction with highway 166, as the Brig. General George H. Wark memorial highway. No other portion of the Purple Heart/Combat Wounded Veterans Highway will be affected.

Brigadier General Wark was born near Liberty, Kansas on 12/19/1878. In 1900 he graduated from Montgomery County High School in Independence and in 1903 he received a law degree from the University of Kansas. Wark joined the Kansas National Guard in 1909, and in 1916 he was elected to the Kansas State Senate. He served our nation with distinction as a combat officer during WWI, where he received a Silver Star. Wark later continued his service through the Kansas National Guard, rising to the rank of Brigadier General.

**Protecting Waterfowl Hunting in Kansas (HB 2507):** Kansas has a problem with too many out-of-state hunters gobbling up many of the best spots to hunt waterfowl. HB 2507 was passed to help protect those prime spots for Kansas hunters. The bill increases the state migratory waterfowl

stamp fee for non-residents from the current \$8 to be a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$200. It also increases the price for residents from \$8 to \$15.

Additionally, HB 2507 no longer requires the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife & Parks (KDW&P) to disclose information regarding the precise location of any endangered or threatened species, except when requested by a landowner upon whose property the threatened or endangered species is located.

Finally, the bill authorizes the KDW&P to adopt higher state park fees for motor vehicle permits, as well as camping and utility fees, registrations, and other charges described in the rules and regulations submitted on March 6<sup>th</sup>. HB 2507 passed the Senate 29–11 and the House 120–4. Because of the Park fee increases, I voted no.

**Making Local Honey More Readily Available (HB 2158):** Passage of HB 2158 makes it easier for small-scale beekeepers, who sell no more than \$35,000 annually, to sell their products directly to consumers. The bill allows beekeepers who follow basic rules, such as properly packaging and labelling their products and generally keeping them in their natural, unprocessed form, to sell packaged honey and honeycombs without needing a food establishment or food processing license. HB 2158 passed unanimously in the Senate and 110–11 in the House.

**Limiting Property Tax Increases (HB 2745):** Passage of HB 2745 would empower Kansans to limit property tax increases to no more than three percent or the consumer price increase Midwest Region (CPI-M) (inflation), whichever is lower. If local government (counties, cities, school districts, etc.) believe it necessary to raise property taxes by more than 3% or the CPI-M, voters can file protest petitions between August 10 and September 15. The protest petition will be included with the existing revenue neutral rate notices mailed to taxpayers. If ten percent of registered voters in the taxing district sign the petition, the proposed budget is automatically disapproved, and the taxing authority can only collect the same amount of taxes as in the prior year.

It was interesting to hear some legislators complain that the protest petition puts too much power in the hands of voters to limit the amount of taxes they must pay. Their comments show the difficulty we face in enacting property tax reform. I see HB 2745 as a good thing. Why not allow taxpayers the opportunity to determine if a local unit of government truly needs to increase spending by more than 3% or the rate of inflation?

HB 2745 only passed the Senate 22–18 and the House 63–59. Not nearly enough to override the expected veto.

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

Virgil Peck  
State Senator