

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

April 28, 2025

With the 2025 Legislative Session adjourned, the only things remaining on the legislative calendar are joint committee meetings, task force meetings and yet to be appointed interim committees and meeting dates. I currently serve on two joint committees, the Joint Committee on Kansas Security (like the Intelligence Committee at the federal level) and the Robert G. (Bob) Bethel Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight (deals with social service issues and Medicaid). Only time will tell if I'm given more responsibilities that require additional trips to Topeka.

Last week I wrote about SB 24, a bill expanding eligibility for the Kansas Promise Scholarship Program, and that I expected it would receive the Governor's signature. I was wrong. Gov. Laura Kelly vetoed SB 24, making it her 19th veto of the 2025 legislative session. Since the Legislature has adjourned, there will be no opportunity to override the veto.

Most bills passed during a session take effect on publication in the statute book – July 1st. Below are a couple of those bills. I'm writing about these bills because the topics have generated a lot of interest from Kansans.

Real-Time Vehicle Insurance Verification (SB 42): The bill will enact the Kansas Real Time Motor Vehicle Insurance Verification Act (Act) and require the Kansas Commissioner of Insurance (Commissioner) to establish an online system for verification of motor vehicle insurance. The newly developed system will be web-based, supersede any other verification system requirements, and be the only system in Kansas for this purpose. Insurance companies insuring vehicles registered in Kansas will be required to cooperate with the Commissioner to establish and maintain the system as specified in the Act.

Following a testing period of not less than nine months, the system must be fully operational by July 1, 2026. Passage of SB 42 aligns Kansas with 18 other states that have real-time confirmation of auto insurance coverage.

Provisions of SB 42 require the state to notify drivers in real time that their insurance coverage has lapsed and that they have 30 days to obtain proper coverage, or their vehicle registration will be revoked. Additionally, the Commissioner will establish a response time for insurance agents and insurance companies to respond to inquiries from the Insurance Department and adds failure to respond to such inquiries to the list of actions that could lead to action being taken against an agent's license.

In 2024, state troopers handed out 8,030 tickets for not showing proof of insurance, and in 2023 they issued 7,811 tickets.

Current Kansas law requires drivers to have minimum coverage of \$25,000 for bodily injury per individual, \$50,000 bodily injury per accident and \$25,000 for property damage per accident. Failing to carry proper insurance coverage is a misdemeanor subject to a fine of \$300 to \$1,000 or up to six months in jail. With the price of replacing some vehicles, many (including me) feel the current limits are too low.

Protecting Kansas from Foreign Adversaries (SB 9): A 10-page bill, SB 9, creates The Kansas Land and Military Installation Act (Act) to help protect Kansas from foreign adversaries like China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, etc. by prohibiting foreign adversaries from acquiring land near our military bases and ensuring government agencies only purchase American- or allied-made drones and drone technology.

The Act disallows foreign adversaries from acquiring land within 100 miles of a military installation in Kansas or an adjacent state – designed to cover most of Kansas. It also prohibits government agencies from purchasing or acquiring drones whose critical components were produced in a country of concern, or whose critical components were produced or owned by a foreign principal.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator