

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

February 2, 2026

During the week of January 26th, the Senate took steps toward protecting females from males intruding in their personal spaces (& sports), ending a taxpayer funded benefit for illegal immigrants, strengthening penalties for criminal activity, and honored a young man who was a hero to many.

Protections for Females (SB 244): In recent years the Legislature has been successful in pushing back against the left's woke ideology. We overrode Governor Kelly's vetoes of legislation ensuring that girls and women don't have to compete against boys or men in sports, passed the Women's Bill of Rights, defining the word "woman" in statute, and we put a stop to irreversible sex change procedures on minors. On January 28th, we took another major step forward when we passed SB 244 by a margin of 30-9.

Kansans know that the words gender and sex are interchangeable when it comes to distinguishing between males and females. However, last year a district court judge, who apparently doesn't understand, ruled that legislation that uses the word gender doesn't also mean biological sex. The ruling allowed some 2,500 confused persons in Kansas to change the gender/sex designation on their driver's license and ID cards and necessitated the passage of SB 244.

In short, SB 244 disallows changes to gender markers on driver's licenses that contradict an individual's biological sex at birth and renders any driver's license issued prior to July 1, 2026, that identifies the gender of the individual on the license in a manner contrary to the bill's definition of gender as invalid.

Since the House previously passed SB 244 by a vote of 87-36, it now goes to the governor. She may veto the bill, but there's no doubt we'll override a veto.

Eliminating Taxpayer Funded Benefits for Illegal Aliens (SB254): The Biden open-border policies have drained public resources and undermined the rule of law — and aided in the Senate passing SB 254 by a 30-9 vote. The bill specifies that immigrants "unlawfully present in the United States" (illegal) can't receive a state or local public benefit, like in-state college tuition.

According to the most recent data – the Fall of 2024 – there were 310 illegal immigrant students enrolled in state universities, community colleges and technical colleges who received in-state tuition. By denying this benefit to persons illegally in the United States, SB 254 aligns with federal law and promotes fiscal responsibility, saving Kansas taxpayers millions in education

and welfare costs, while discouraging illegal immigration and encouraging respect for our borders and sovereignty.

During the floor debate I told my colleagues that most Kansas taxpayers oppose subsidizing the college tuition of illegal immigrants. I said: *"Our constituents, our voters, they're not happy with this provision. I have been pushed many, many times by many, many individuals from across this state to eliminate this benefit for illegal aliens This is an issue that Kansas citizens have questioned and questioned and questioned: 'Why on Earth are you, Kansas Legislature, providing a benefit to illegal aliens that you do not provide to Americans?'"*

The bill is now in the Kansas House.

Tough on Crime (HB 2347): A holdover bill from last session, HB 2347, designed to make Kansans safer, passed both chambers on January 26th sending it to the Governor.

HB 2347 contains several provisions including: changing the required culpability of a person obtaining control of stolen property from "knowing" such property is stolen to "has reason to know" such property is stolen; increases criminal penalties for buying sexual relations and requires offenders to complete an educational or treatment program regarding commercial sexual exploitation; strengthens the crime of criminal use of a financial card to include gift cards, including acquiring or retaining possession of a gift card without the consent of the cardholder, issuer, or seller, or altering a gift card; and creates the crime of unlawful use of a laser pointer – specifically directing light at a law enforcement officer, an aircraft or the flight path of an aircraft. The bill passed the Senate 39-0 and the House 119-4.

Honoring Charlie Kirk (SCR 1615): Through his work at Turning Point USA, Charlie Kirk showcased his commitment to free speech and civil discourse on college campuses across the country. Due to Kirk's efforts, we're seeing a renewed nationwide commitment to promote free speech for all.

Tragically, Kirk was assassinated on September 10, 2025, while speaking at an event in Utah – but we can never forget his legacy. That's why the Senate adopted SCR 1615, honoring the life and legacy of Charlie Kirk and recognizing October 14 – Charlie's birthday – as Charlie Kirk Free Speech Day. The Senate adopted the Resolution 30-9.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator