

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

May 5, 2026

Knowing there was still legislation awaiting action by the Governor (sign, veto, or become law without her signature), I wanted to wait until the outcome of all bills from the 2026 session was determined prior to writing a final article. The results are now in.

It's said, "elections have consequences", and nowhere is that clearer than looking at the 2026 legislative session in Kansas. Since adjournment on April 11th, Governor Kelly added six bills to her record number of vetoes for a session. With the Legislature adjourned, none of the six bills will face a veto override.

Below is a brief description of bills that won't become law (at least not in 2026) due to being vetoed.

Educating Young Americans (HB 2412): HB 2412 would have required schools to provide instruction on the negative impacts of communist, fascist, and socialist regimes and ideologies for students in "non-elementary grades" (as determined by each school district), and require high school students to pass (with a minimum grade of 70%) a civics test as a condition of graduation.

The test would have consisted of 20 randomly selected questions taken from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services test given to applicants for United States citizenship — the exam would only be offered in English.

Protecting Agritourism (HB 2111): With urban sprawl, working farms are being engulfed by cities expanding their boundaries. HB 2111 would have prohibited a city or county from enforcing a building code, ordinance, or resolution regulating the use of a non-public registered agritourism facility defined as, *"a registered agritourism location that is 160 acres or less, located on a working farm and has an agricultural education facility that provides learning opportunities related to agricultural activities, and members of the general public are permitted on the location by specific invitation only."*

Minimum Standards for Recess Time (HB 2763): In an effort to improve the health and education of Kansas children, the legislature passed HB 2763. HB 2763 would have required public schools, starting in the 2027–2028 school year, to provide a minimum of 30 minutes of daily recess for K-5th grade. Schools could count up to one hour of the daily recess time as a part of the school term. The required recess time could not be used as part of a

disciplinary action for students unless the student was an immediate threat to themselves or others. Finally, the bill would require the State Board of Education to establish a State Physical Fitness Test.

Kansas Legal Tender Act (HB 2515): HB 2515 would have established the Kansas Legal Tender Act providing for no state income tax on gains from the sale of gold and silver coins or bullion and prohibit gold and silver from being characterized as personal property for taxation and regulatory purposes.

Tax Break for Military and Sr. Citizens (HB 2044): HB 2044 passed the Senate unanimously and the House 116-4, so I'm baffled by this veto.

HB 2044 would have exempted the income of Armed Forces or active-duty reserve or active-duty National Guard from income tax beginning in 2027 and protect senior citizens currently eligible for the Homestead and SAFESR property tax relief program from being disqualified simply because the county appraiser increased the valuation of their home to more than \$350,000.

Providing Property Tax Relief (HB 2043): The final veto, and the one with the greatest impact on the largest number of Kansans, was HB 2043.

HB 2043 created a protest petition process for voters if a local government wanted to pass a budget that exceeded the spending in the prior year plus inflation, the Consumer Price Index-Midwest (CPI-M), or 3%, whichever was less. If a petition was signed by at least 10% of the number of votes cast in the last Secretary of State election in the taxing district, the jurisdiction's budget must stay within the CPI-M or 3% (whichever is less).

The bill wasn't nearly as strong as I thought it needed to be to provide meaningful property tax relief—it included too many exemptions. The exemptions included totally exempting schools from the requirements, increases due to a boundary change, change in use of real property, expiration of a property tax abatement, expiration of a tax incentive, and bonds, temporary notes, no-fund warrants, etc. that existed prior to July 1, 2026.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator