

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

March 30, 2026

On Friday, March 27th, (more accurately, early Saturday morning) the Legislature heard the sound of the gavel signaling we had reached first adjournment. Legislators can now spend 12 days in District visiting with constituents and catching up on personal responsibilities.

There are far too many bills to write about in one article. But I'll cover a few here and more over the next few weeks.

Two More Veto Overrides (SB 368 & HB 2635): For the first time as a legislator, I made a motion to override a gubernatorial veto by saying, "I move that SB 368 be passed notwithstanding the Governor's veto." The override was successful in the Senate 30–9. That vote was followed with the same motion in the House by Representative Ron Bryce who secured sufficient votes, 87–37, completing the override and allowing SB 368 to become law.

Passage of SB 368 gives the more than 11,000 Kansas households who choose to participate in a HealthCare Sharing Ministry (HCSM) the same tax benefits as health insurance – except the deduction is limited to \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for a married couple.

HCSMs act as not-for-profit clearinghouses connecting people with medical bills with those willing to pay them. The HCSM model is not for everyone, but for those who choose to participate, it helps control rising healthcare costs.

The other override was of HB 2635, a bill to prohibit local governments from passing a regulation that requires pregnancy care centers to refer women for abortions, counsel in favor of an abortion, post signs or flyers promoting abortions, or force them to hire employees who don't share their pro-life values. One legislator rightfully said, "The governor is quick to talk about supporting choice, but that support disappears the moment a mother chooses life." The Senate override vote was 30–9 and the House vote 87–35.

As a reminder, earlier in the Session the Legislature overrode the Governor's veto of SB 244. A bill protecting females from having males intrude into their private spaces – restrooms, locker rooms, etc.

More Alcohol Sales in Kansas? (HB 2481): With bipartisan opposition and bipartisan support, a step was taken to allow for an increase in the amount of alcohol served in Kansas during the FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, June 11th through July 19th. The Senate vote was 23–17, while in the House it was more lopsided at 86–39. I was an absolute no.

States across the county have limits on alcohol consumption for good reason — to protect its citizens. No matter what a person’s beliefs are concerning alcohol, there’s no denying that alcohol consumption has contributed to fatality auto accidents, spousal and child abuse, job loss, and health issues. Passage of HB 2481 will allow bars and liquor stores to stay open and sell alcohol 23 hours a day (6 a.m. through to the next morning at 5 a.m.), seven days a week for the 38-day period when the U.S. hosts the World Cup.

HB 2481 does require a county commission or the governing body of a city, by resolution or ordinance, to opt-in to the expanded alcohol sales hours before the hours are changed. A county or city making such a decision will be required to submit a copy of the resolution or ordinance to the Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control within the Kansas Department of Revenue.

I can’t disagree with what one senator said, “I don’t want to wake up during the FIFA World Cup and hear about some child’s parent being killed in a car wreck on their way to work from somebody leaving a bar at 5 a.m.”

As a reminder, in 2025 the state committed \$28 million to the World Cup.

Avoiding Daylight Savings Time (HB 2594): Although I like the idea of avoiding adjusting our clocks twice a year, I was one of only four no votes to HB 2594, a bill to exempt Kansas from daylight saving time and adopt permanent standard time. My opposition was not to the idea, but because the law will only take effect if Missouri enacts similar legislation. What?!? We’re going to let the “show-me” state determine Kansas law?!? I don’t think so!

Wording in HB 2594 states that if Congress enacts a federal law adopting permanent daylight saving time, Kansas will move to permanent daylight saving time, rather than standard time. The House hasn’t voted on the current language of HB 2594 but might when we return to Topeka on April 9th.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator