

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

March 23, 2026

With only a few days remaining before first adjournment, March 27th, a lot of decisions still need to be made that will determine the fate of many bills. We'll soon know which bills receive approval and which ones must wait for another session.

Last week, the Senate passed several dozen bills dealing with a variety of topics. Some are headed to the Governor, but most will go to a conference committee where the differences between what the Senate passed and what the House passed will be negotiated.

More Amateur Events in Kansas? (HB 2346): By a vote of 28–12, the Senate approved HB 2346, which will allocate \$1.5 million annually to lure amateur sporting events to Kansas. Supporters say HB 2346 will help Kansas be more competitive when incentivizing groups to hold tournaments (soccer, volleyball, softball, & basketball, etc.), in our State. Although I was able to amend the bill so no taxpayer money is used, only lottery proceeds, I voted no — it just doesn't seem like a function of government.

HB 2346 previously passed the House, 95–21, but since the Senate added amendments, it now goes back to the House to concur with the amendments or send it to a conference committee.

Ending Taxpayer Funded Benefits to Illegal Aliens (SB 254): A major step forward to ending the use of Kansas tax dollars for illegal aliens was taken on March 19th, when the House, by a vote of 78–46, passed the conference committee report (CCR) on SB 254. The bill will prohibit an alien who is "unlawfully present in the United States" (breaking the laws of the United States) from receiving any state or local public benefit, except benefits required by federal law.

SB 254 is a commonsense bill that shouldn't need to exist. If we're truly intent on deterring illegal immigration, we must stop offering taxpayer funded benefits as a magnet. The Senate will soon vote on the CCR, where I'm certain it will pass, sending it to the Governor. Some expect Governor Kelly to side with illegal aliens and veto the bill. Only time will tell.

Expanding Educational Opportunities (HB 2468): Last July, when H.R.1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, was signed into law, it implemented a federal

tax credit scholarship program for K-12 students that will take effect January 1, 2027. Under the scholarship program, qualifying taxpayers can receive a federal tax credit of up to \$1,700 for contributions to scholarship granting organizations (SGOs). The SGOs are required to use the contributions to provide scholarships to students at public and private schools located in their state. If Kansas doesn't participate in the federal program, Kansans could still give to SGOs, and receive the federal tax credit, but the money will go to participating states – and not stay in Kansas. All four of our neighboring states opted into the federal program, as did the nearby states of Arkansas and Iowa.

HB 2468 expands the current state scholarship program from an annual cap of \$10 million to \$15 million—the cap was reached in 2025—and incentivizes Kansans to keep their money in Kansas rather than sending it to another state's SGO. The House vote was 76-44 and the Senate was 27–13. HB 2468 now goes to the governor where a veto is expected.

Strengthening the Woman's Right-to-Know Act (HB 2727 & HB 2729):

HB 2727 empowers women by giving them a clearer, faster way to enforce their rights and ensure they receive all the information they're entitled to before making a life-altering decision. Specifically, HB 2727 strengthens Kansas' informed consent protections for women considering an abortion by making it easier to hold abortion providers accountable when requirements in law aren't followed. The bill allows a woman to choose a streamlined path to recovery, including damages (up to \$5,000), reimbursement of costs, and attorney fees—without being forced into the lengthy and complicated medical malpractice process.

HB 2729 also strengthens Kansas' informed consent law by ensuring that women receive clear and consistent state-approved information before having an abortion. Rather than allowing abortion providers to decide what information they'll give women considering an abortion, HB 2729 requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to create standardized forms and notices that must be provided prior to an abortion and make it clear that this information comes directly from the state. Finally, HB 2729 standardizes the required signage, including notices related to medication induced abortion and reversal options.

HB 2727 and HB 2729 each passed the Senate and the House with identical votes, 31-9 and 87–37 respectively and are headed to the governor.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator