

THE PECK PERSPECTIVE

(From the Capitol)

February 9, 2026

The first bill of the 2026 session to pass both chambers and reach the governor's desk was HB 2347. Written about last week, HB 2347 is a wide-ranging measure that covers buying sexual relations, toughens the penalties for auto theft and creates the crime of unlawful use of a laser pointer. The bill was signed on February 5th and will become law on July 1, 2026.

Increasing Transparency (SB 299): The Kansas Supreme Court Nominating Commission (Commission) has been cloaked in secrecy for far too long. The nine-member Commission, made up of five lawyers elected by their peers and four people appointed by the governor, currently keeps information regarding the Commission a secret. The Senate unanimously passed SB 299 which states, *"All records of the Commission, including the names and cities of residence of the people who have been nominated to serve on the Commission or as chair of the Commission, shall be open and subject to disclosure."* Background check information or sensitive financial information of nominees for judicial office may still be closed by the Commission."

Some will remember that in August voters will determine how Kansas' supreme court justices will be selected going forward and may question the need for SB 299. Although passage of SCR 1611 by the 2025 legislature allows Kansas voters the option to amend the Kansas Constitution and then vote on who sits on the state's highest court, there is a strong possibility one or two of the current justices will resign prior to the August election. Therefore, the Senate passed SB 299, adding transparency in the way state supreme court justices are now selected. SB 299 is now in the House.

Sr. Citizen Hunting and Fishing License (SB 364): The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee recently put their stamp of approval on SB 364, sending it to the full Senate. The bill allows senior citizens in Kansas age 65 and older a discount when purchasing a combination hunting and fishing license. The fee can *"not to exceed one-eighth of the fee for a general combination lifetime hunting and fishing license"*. Currently, the fee is set at \$962.50. Also in SB 364 is a provision to provide for a combination lifetime hunting and fishing license for Kansas kids age five and younger for \$300 and for children ages 6 to 15 the fee will be \$400.

Keeping Additives Out of School Lunches (SB 390): Amid efforts by the U.S. Health and Human Services to remove petroleum-based dyes from food as part of the Make America Healthy Again initiative, the Senate Agriculture

and Natural Resources Committee is working on a proposal (SB 390) aimed at keeping 13 chemical additives out of school lunches.

SB 390 would require, beginning with school year 2027-2028, that a school district that participates in a food service program would not be allowed to serve as part of a free or reduced-priced meal any food with any of the following additives: brominated vegetable oil (BVO), potassium bromate, propylparaben, azodicarbonamide, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), titanium dioxide, red 3, red 40, yellow 5, yellow 6, blue 1, blue 2 or green 3.

During a food facility inspection, the school would have to verify that they do not serve any food that contains the prohibited additives. If a school cannot make this certification, they would be required to submit a corrective action plan to the Secretary of Health and Environment within 30 days of the inspection.

Currently, eight other states – Arizona, California, Delaware, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia – have adopted such food additive bans.

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

Virgil Peck
State Senator