



WEEKLY RUNDOWN

Friday, March 22, 2019

Carol,

Welcome to the first KDP Weekly Rundown - the Kansas Democratic Party's update of the biggest things going on in the Kansas Legislature. What are we focused on this week? School finance, Medicaid expansion, and more!

K-12 SCHOOL FUNDING

• *What's happening?*

[SB 142](#) is Gov. Laura Kelly's school finance plan. It has three goals: adequately fund our public schools, address the needs of our students, and to resolve the Gannon litigation. Based on recommendations from the Kansas Department of Education, this bill is supported by the Kansas Association of School Boards. It's a good faith effort to invest adequately in our public schools while also maintaining the stability of the state's budget.

• *What's next?*

The bill passed out of the Senate last week on a [32-8 vote](#) and has been introduced in the House. The House K-12 Education Budget Committee held a public hearing on the bill last Tuesday.

• *Where can I learn more?*

- [Gov. Laura Kelly eager for writing of final chapter in school-finance debate](#). *Topeka Capital-Journal*, March 19, 2019.
- [Kansas Governor and Senate ready to end school spending battle, House not so much](#). *KCUR*, March 18, 2019.
- [Kansas lawmakers need a school funding plan. Their options couldn't be more different](#). *Kansas City Star*, March 15, 2019.

FEDERAL TAXES

- ***What's happening?***

[SB 22](#) is an attempt to detach Kansas' tax system from federal rules. It's a fiscally irresponsible bill that only benefits big businesses, multinational corporations, and high-income earners. Gov. Kelly has presented a [balanced budget](#) tackling our most urgent priorities and rebuilding our state savings without raising taxes. If Republican lawmakers keep pushing legislation like SB 22, they'll once again force Kansas into a self-inflicted budget crisis impacting our schools, highway program, children, and fragile state economy.

- ***What's next?***

This bill passed the Senate on a [26-14 vote](#) and the House on a [76-43 vote](#). If Gov. Kelly vetoes the bill, the Legislature doesn't appear to have the votes necessary to override her decision.

- ***Where can I learn more?***

- [Kansas Republicans pass \\$500 million tax bill. Could Gov. Kelly's first veto be next?](#) *Wichita Eagle*, March 14, 2019.
- [Kansas legislators advance schools plan, pass tax bill.](#) *Associated Press*, March 14, 2019.
- [Kansas Senate adopts \\$190 million 'windfall' income tax reduction bill.](#) *Topeka Capital-Journal*, Feb. 7, 2019.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

- ***What's happening?***

The House passed [HB 2066](#), legislation approving Gov. Kelly's Medicaid expansion proposal this week. This bill is expected to expand KanCare - the state's privatized Medicaid program - to cover at least 130,000 additional Kansans. KanCare expansion is also expected to have a significant economic impact by creating good-paying jobs and protecting rural and urban hospitals and clinics.

- ***What's next?***

The House passed Medicaid expansion on final action, [69-54](#). The bill now heads to the Senate.

- ***Where can I learn more?***

- [Kansas House approves Medicaid expansion, but the fight isn't over yet.](#) *KCUR*, March 20, 2019.
- ['Rare demonstration of political bravery': Kansas House advocates Medicaid expansion plan.](#) *Topeka Capital-Journal*, March 20, 2019.

- [Kansas Medicaid expansion advocates let voices ring: 'We want a vote.'](#) *Topeka Capital-Journal*, March 19, 2019.

KPERS

• *What's happening?*

The Legislature has sent [SB 9](#) to Gov. Kelly's desk, which would pay for \$115 million of the debt accrued by KPERS, the state's public pension system. KPERS payments have been delayed, layered, or eliminated 15 times in the last nine years. Left unchecked, payments are expected to balloon to almost \$1 billion per year in the next 10 years. SB 9 is a step in the right direction, but it's just the first step toward putting KPERS on a more sustainable path.

• *What's next?*

This bill was signed by Gov. Kelly on Monday. It passed the Senate on a [40-0 vote](#) and the House on a [117-0 vote](#).

• *Where can I learn more?*

- [Gov. Laura Kelly signs first bill sending \\$115 million to cover missed KPERS payment](#) *Topeka Capital-Journal*, March 8, 2019.
- [Update: Kansas governor concedes pension proposal unlikely to pass.](#) *Associated Press*, March 8, 2019.
- [Both sides worked to fix a KPERS problem, but Republicans push to take all the credit \(OPINION, Rep. Nancy Lusk , D-Overland Park\).](#) *Kansas City Star*, Feb. 25, 2019.

FARM BUREAU BILL

• *What's happening?*

[SB 32](#) is a proposal to allow the Kansas Farm Bureau to offer an unregulated cheap alternative to health insurance. This bill essentially returns us to the days where Kansans with pre-existing conditions could be rejected for coverage or be charged much higher insurance rates. Furthermore, the bill eliminates the oversight provided by the insurance commissioner and forces patients to go it alone in coverage disputes. There are also real concerns that siphoning over 40,000 healthy Kansans out of the current marketplace will destabilize the individual insurance market and shift the burden of healthcare costs onto the very sick.

• *What's next?*

This bill passed the Senate [28-11](#). The House Insurance Committee held a hearing on the bill on March 6.

- **Where can I learn more?**

- [Kansas Republicans are pushing a junk argument for junk health insurance \(EDITORIAL\)](#). *Kansas City Star*, Feb. 25, 2019.
- [Kansas Senate passes Farm Bureau health-plan bill](#). *Topeka Capital-Journal*, Feb. 20, 2019.
- [Critics of Farm Bureau's health policy bill call for coverage of pre-existing conditions](#), *Topeka Capital-Journal*. March 13, 2019.

CHILD WELFARE

- **What's happening?**

Under the guidance of Acting Secretary Laura Howard, the new leadership team at the Department for Children and Families has implemented several procedures to improve transparency at DCF and address the concerns of Kansans and lawmakers. The legislature must make this agency a priority and provide the needed funding to keep our most vulnerable children safe.

- **Where can I learn more?**

- [Need more social workers in Kansas? Advocates and providers say loosen standards](#). *KCUR*, March 18, 2019.
- [Secretary of the Department for Children and Families discussed plans to address challenges within the department](#). *KCUR*, March 14, 2019.
- [A true public servant': New Kansas child welfare leader vows openness, more resources](#). *Kansas City Star*, Feb. 25, 2019.

Onward,

KDP Team

Paid for by the Kansas Democratic Party, William Hutton, Treasurer

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