FROM THE DOME TO HOME

February 27, 2026

BUDGET PROCESS EXPLAINED

The favorable passage of HB 2434 is an excellent segue for explaining the budget process in the Kansas State Legislature. With the exception of last session, the House and Senate always introduce and work their own budget bills. These budget bills are then voted out of their respective committees, House Appropriations and Senate Ways & Means, and then sent to their respective chamber floors, where they are voted on and, if passed out favorably, are sent to the opposite chamber. If differences between the two budgets exist then a conference committee is called, with delegations from both chambers. In the conference committee the two delegations negotiate, through rounds of offer and counteroffer, till both sides agree to the same content in the budget bill, which then becomes the conference committee's report (CCR). This CCR is then sent back to both chambers for votes. If voted out favorably by both chambers then the budget is passed on to the Governor, where she either signs the bill, with potential line-item vetoes of particular areas, or vetoes the bill entirely. Currently the Senate has not voted out its budget bill from their floor, and thus the process is delayed.

HOUSE PASSES BUDGET

On Thursday the Kansas House of Representatives voted out House Bill (HB) 2434 favorably, the House's Budget Bill for the 2026 Session. Discussion on the bill lasted one hour and thirty minutes and culminated with a vote of 68 to 53, I voted yes. This budget reflects weeks of work by several committees, both in and out of session, to deliver a balanced budget that reduces spending, total State General Fund (SGF) spends declined in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 compared to Fiscal Year 2026, and meets the state's obligations to Kansans. Detailed below are five areas affected by new spending in HB 2434.

- First is agriculture. In FY 2026, $1 million from State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) was added to help start the Musil Center for Sustainable Wheat Production at Kansas State University (KSU). In FY 2027 $2.4 million SWPF will be spent for further research on the Equus Beds Aquifer, $1.7 million SWPF will be allocated for increased State Aid to Water Conservation Districts, and $5 million America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be used for construction of a new Dairy Barn, in partnership with the university and private industry, on KSU's campus.

- Second is education. In FY 27 $10 million SGF will be added for Special Education State Aid to schools, $5.5 million SGF will be used to fund the Blueprint for Literacy Program with the Board of Regents, $5 million SGF to fund a new Alziehmer's Research Program with Kansas University (KU), $5 million SGF for aviation research with Wichita State University (WSU), and $5 million SGF for a Nuclear Research Accelerator at KSU.

"The time is always right to do the right thing!"– Martin Luther King Jr.

- The third area is economic development. In FY 27, with the Department of Commerce, $12.5 million SGF will be added for the Moderate Income Housing Grant Program, $1 million Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) will be added for the TOWNS Grant Program, and $2 million EDIF will be spent for the State Housing Trust Fund.

- Fourth is Public Safety. In FY 27 $5.4 million SGF will be added to cover increased costs in healthcare contracts with the Department of Corrections, $3 million SGF will be spent for a new Hearing Protection Program with the Attorney General, and $2 million SGF will be allocated for the Critical Facility Mapping Program with the State 911 Board.

- Last is Social Services. In FY 2027 $16.1 million SGF will be added to increase reimbursement rates for Home Care Based Service (HCBS) waivers, $14.6 million SGF will be spent to increase Medicaid capacity payment rates by $10 per resident per day, $28.9 million SGF will be allocated to fund the new South Central Regional Mental Health Hospital in Wichita, $6 million SGF will be spent to increase Medicaid dental rates, and $4 million SGF will be used to provide one-time grants to community mental health centers.

Contact My Office

Representative Troy L. Waymaster
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612
troy.waymaster@house.ks.gov
www.kslegislature.gov.
www.troywaymaster.com
785-296-7672
Paid for by Troy L. Waymaster for Kansas House, James Malone, Treasurer.

COMMITTEE *HAPP*ENINGS

The House Appropriations (HAPP) Committee enjoyed a more relaxed schedule this week, as meetings were only held on Wednesday and Thursday. Overall, five informational briefings were heard, and two bills were worked and passed out by the committee this week.

Wednesday saw Rachel Willis, with the Department of Commerce, present an update on the STAR, sales tax and revenue, Bond Program in Kansas. She informed committee members on the history and functionality of the program, and the current number of operating districts, of which most have paid off their bonds. The committee also received an overview of the Joint Committee on State Building Construction recommendations regarding state facilities by the Kansas Legislative Research Department, and voted out HB 2427, establishing the positions of fiscal integrity auditor, favorably.

On Thursday Robert Stuart, with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, updated the committee on the status of the Pittsburg Regional Crime Center's construction, set to be finished by the start of next year, and its positive impacts for Southeast Kansas. After that Haely Ordoyne, the Kansas Long-Term Care Ombudsman, provided an update on the state of Long-Term Care in Kansas and provided recommendations for improving the institution. Following that, Ryan Vincent, with the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation, provided a report on the current progress of the organization's efforts to increase access to housing in the state. After those three reports the committee debated and passed out HB 2513, Claims against the State, favorably.

It is a distinct honor to serve as your representative for the 109th Kansas House District and the state of Kansas. Please contact me with your thoughts, concerns, and questions. I always appreciate hearing from the residents of the 109th House District and others from the state of Kansas, as well.