

# OPINION

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? Contact Stephanie Jump at (620) 532-3151 or email [sjump@kcnonline.com](mailto:sjump@kcnonline.com)

## Why Complaint Was Filed Against Senate Panel

By Clay Wirestone, Kansas Reflector Opinion Editor

The Kansas Open Records Act makes clear demands of state and local government.

This vital law requires timely release of public records within three business days of receiving a request. If officials can't fulfill that timeline, they're required to explain why, in detail.

The Kansas Senate Committee on Government Efficiency claims to be working for the good of all by ferreting out waste and bloat in state government. Perhaps it should start with itself, or at least with chairwoman Renee Erickson, R-Wichita. She led the effort to stone-wall news media requests for public recommendations submitted to COGE through its online portal. *Kansas Reflector* requested the records from her on Feb. 25. They weren't released until April 9 — more than six weeks later.

By that time, our reporter Anna Kaminski had already examined a leaked copy of public feedback.

That batch of public comments suggested why Erickson pushed the public release until after the legislative session ended. Kansans blasted the committee with messages calling for Medicaid expansion, legalized cannabis and tolerance for LGBTQ+ youths. They show, in short, how anti-government narratives miss the mark in Kansas, where right-wing ideologues have poisoned the well of state government for years.

On Wednesday, *Kansas Reflector* editor in chief Sherman Smith submitted a complaint to the state Attorney General's Office about this delay. Erickson's committee did not respond to our request in a timely manner, and the broader public suffered because crucial information was hidden. COGE members could access the messages in mid-March, but their constituents could not.

We believe that government officials should be held responsible for delay and obfuscation.

We heard attempts to justify the delays at a COGE meeting May 13. There were just so many messages. We had to screen them all. We didn't delete anything.

Gordon Self, a legislative staff member, opined: "Once the KORA requests were received and a response was made, there was a review of the records, all 2,000, to determine if any of the records did contain information. After a thorough review, there were some identified that did have some sensitive information in them."

Erickson harumphed: "At the end of the day, there are none that have been deleted, there are none that are not available for review. But as was said, we wanted to make sure that we were not including information that was not appropriate for such a situation."

Forgive me for rolling my eyes. These self-satisfied excuses don't add up.

None of the messages reviewed by *Kansas Reflector* staff appear to include sensitive information that the government had to shield from prying eyes. As noted earlier, a tranche of unredacted submissions was leaked to us in late March. We have compared the two versions. There's no there there.

In one message, for instance, Statehouse staff omitted a profane phrase. That didn't protect anyone's personal or private information.

In another case, the same suggestion was apparently submitted in two categories. The messages mention Senate President Ty Masterson's lucrative side hustle at Wichita State University, where he earns more than \$150,000 a year as "director of GoCreate, a Koch

Collaborative." In one of them, Masterson's name has been redacted, along with that of the author. In the other, neither Masterson nor the author has been redacted.

Only a few dozen of the thousand-plus messages saw any redactions at all.

Perhaps Statehouse staff don't have the slightest idea what they're doing. Perhaps they made a few random edits to the messages to justify the month-plus delay. Neither option should fill Kansans with confidence in their legislators or the work of COGE.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the COGE web portal includes the warning that "Portal submissions are public records that are subject to the Kansas Open Records Act." Those sending in feedback have to check a box next to that warning. Why even bother to do that if you're going to screen the material afterward?

Like other public records conflicts, this runs the risk of sounding petty. So what, I can hear some readers ask. You got the information anyway. Why fuss?

My answer remains the same as when I wrote about Emporia State University's unconscionable response in turning over information to *Kansas Reflector*. This information belongs to everyone. Lawmakers don't get to pass a law and then arbitrarily decide whether to follow it. If they expect town and county governments to follow KORA, if they expect other state agencies to follow KORA, they can damn well follow it themselves.

That's what justice and fair play demands. That's what their fellow Kansans deserve. And it's what we're going to do, no matter Erickson's sanctimonious claptrap.

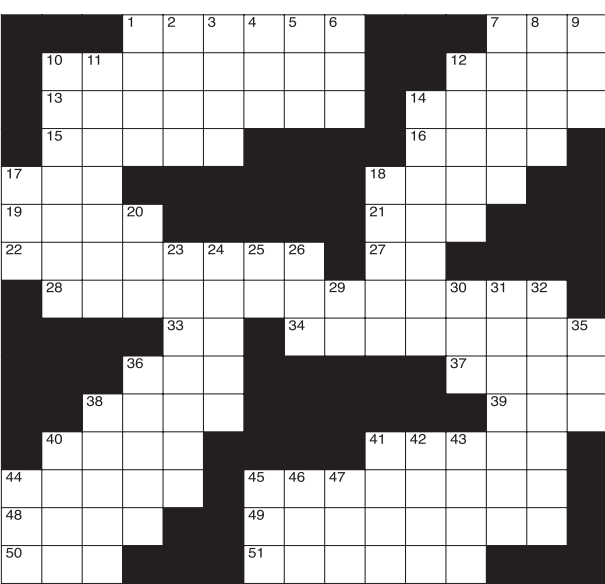
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### CLUES ACROSS

1. Give a raucous cry

7. Mentally ill

10. Natural electrical phenomenon

12. Vessels

13. Judge the worth of something

14. South Asian garments

15. Studied intensively

16. District in Kazakhstan

17. Beloved meal \_\_\_ and cheese

18. Ceases to live

19. Home to BYU

21. What thespians do

22. Julianne Moore and Christina Hendricks are two
27. Double in chemistry

28. Clayton Kershaw plays here

33. Overdose

34. Begrudged

36. Consumed

37. A game of chance

38. A low platform

39. Shelled and crushed coffee bean

40. Dashes

41. Long lock of a woman's hair

44. Indicates silence in music

45. Positively charged

48. In bed

49. Cruciferous vegetable

50. Fuel

51. Kids' ride

### CLUES DOWN

1. Greenish-blue

2. Having sufficient skill, knowledge, etc.

3. Dirt

4. New Zealand mountain parrot

5. Back muscle

6. Supplement with difficulty

7. Kate and Rooney

8. How Amazon identifies its products (abbr.)

9. Emirati island

10. Contended

11. Pear-shaped fruit

12. Parks cars

14. Killing oneself

17. Austrian river

18. Older brothers

20. Home hemodialysis

23. One who is self-absorbed
24. Yellow fever mosquitos

25. Pepper or Oz

26. Soviet Socialist Republic

29. Tellurium

30. Pens are filled with it

31. Use this at dinner

32. Thin fibrous cartilage (pl.)

35. When you were born

36. Oohed and \_\_\_

38. Small freshwater fishes

40. Religion in China

41. Twitches

42. Cape near Lisbon

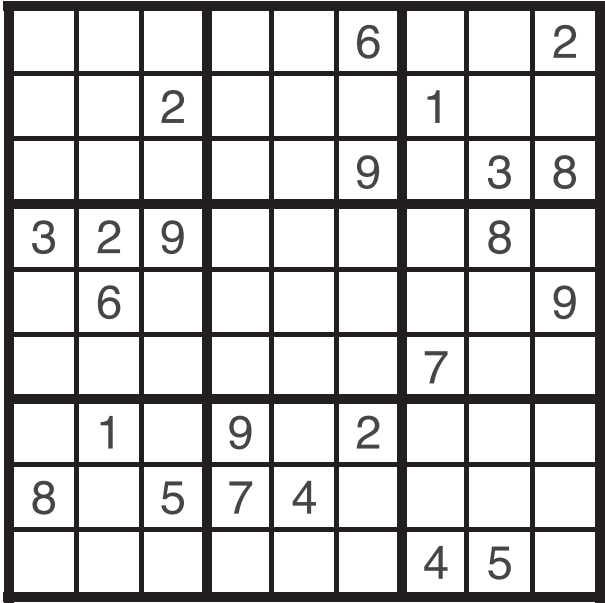
43. Management software

44. Game for kids

45. Ed Murrow's home

46. They \_\_\_

47. Part of the foot



U I D F N T H E N G I N E V R Y G V S P  
A S I H R O F S E A L E V E L A D O E H  
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## PUBLIC NOTICE

(First published in the Kingman Leader-Courier on Thursday, May 15, 2025) 3t

### ELECTION NOTICE:

#### TO ALL RESIDENTS OF ALL INCORPORATED CITIES IN KINGMAN COUNTY BEING:

Cunningham City, Kingman City, Nashville City, Norwich City, Penalosa City, Spivey City and Zenda City.

To those persons living in these cities, there will be a General Election for mayors and city councilmen on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025, for persons to be elected to fill such offices. A Primary Election, if needed, for any positions will be held on August 5th, 2025.

The filing deadline for said positions will be at 12:00 NOON on Monday, June 2nd, 2025. The place of filing will be with the County Clerk located in the Kingman County Courthouse. Filing fee for these positions will be \$20.00 per candidate.

Dated this 7th day of May, 2025.

Carol D. Noblit

Kingman County Election Officer

#### TO ALL RESIDENTS OF USD #331 AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

According to K.S.A. 25-2018 (b):

There shall be a General Election on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025 for the purpose of electing USD #331 Board Members to the position #5, #6, #7 at-large & the unexpired

term of Position #1. A primary election, if any is needed, for all positions will be held on August 5th, 2025. The filing deadline for these positions will be at 12:00 NOON on June 2nd, 2025. The place for filing will be in the office of the Kingman County Clerk located in the Kingman County Courthouse, Kingman, Kansas. The filing fee is \$20.00 per candidate.

Dated this 7th day of May, 2025.

Carol D. Noblit

Kingman County Election Officer

#### TO ALL RESIDENTS OF USD #332 AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

According to K.S.A. 25-2018 (b):

There shall be a General Election on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025, for the purpose of electing USD #332 Board Members to three at-large positions. A Primary Election, if any is needed for all positions will be held on August 5th, 2025. The filing deadline for these positions will be at 12:00 NOON on June 2nd, 2025. The place for filing will be in the office of the Kingman County Clerk located in the Kingman County Courthouse, Kingman, KS. Filing fee is \$20.00 per candidate.

Dated this 7th day of May, 2025.

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Kingman County Election Officer



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