



KIRBY LEE USA Today Sports

A general overall aerial view of Kauffman Stadium (foreground) and Arrowhead Stadium at the Truman Sports Complex on Feb. 14, 2024.

FROM PAGE 1A

# STADIUM

come from local governments first.

“I think that reflects the legislature’s reticence in terms of wanting to fund the stadiums at the state level,” said Patterson, who said he does not expect any action on the three funding bills before the legislative session ends.

The shortage of energy surrounding the stadium funding packages has incensed some Kansas City-area lawmakers. They argue that if conversations about the teams are happening, there needs to be more transparency. And if they’re not, some say, then state lawmakers need to start taking action.

“I don’t see enough movement from the state right now to keep the Royals and the Chiefs,” House Minority Leader Ashley Aune, a Kansas City Democrat, told reporters in response to a question from The Star. “I’m not certain that the leadership in Jackson County is poised to move very quickly on this right now either. So, I’m pretty worried about the fate of our professional sports teams.”

Another Kansas City Democrat was more frank.

“I don’t think people realize how far away we are on getting this done,” Rep. Mark Sharp, a Kansas City Democrat, told The Star. “I think that (the teams are) warning us and telling us softly that they’re looking to move.”

As the session enters its final weeks, the threat of either team moving to Kansas is likely to be on the minds of Missouri officials. Roughly ten months ago, Kansas lawmakers passed an aggressive financing proposal to lure one or both of the teams across the state line.

Kansas launched the effort after Jackson County voters rejected a stadium tax that would have effectively kept the teams in Missouri after their leases expire in 2031. Missouri officials have hosted closed-door talks with the teams and local officials on how to respond to Kansas, but no plan has been presented publicly.

Representatives from the Chiefs and Royals declined to comment for this story.

### ROYALS MOVE TO CLAY COUNTY?

The three stadium funding proposals filed in Missouri would create an entertainment facility capital assistance program, allowing the state to offer millions of dollars in incentives to fund future stadium projects.

But the bills face an uphill climb in the legislature this year and still have not been scheduled for public hearings. Patterson, arguably the state’s most powerful lawmaker, signaled that lawmakers are unlikely to vote on the legislation this year.

However, the legislation intended to lure one of the teams to Clay County is a different story. Patterson said the House is likely to debate the bill creating a Clay County sports complex authority as early as this week, viewing it as a way to entice the Royals to North Kansas City and allow Jackson County to negotiate solely with the Chiefs.

“I think more and more it’s looking like Jackson County and Clay County are going to have to split the teams to make the deal work for both teams to stay in Missouri,” Patterson said. Right now, “we’re trying to do two major sports teams at the same time, and in this day and age, I think that might almost be undo-able.”

The best case scenario, Patterson said, is for the Royals to find a suitable location in Missouri. That would allow Jackson County officials to decide whether they want to put a new Chiefs-only sales tax on the ballot in August or November to keep the team at Arrowhead, he said.

In Patterson’s view, the state’s role would center more on property tax issues in Jackson County than on the stadiums themselves. Closed-door negotiations between state and local officials have often centered on solving issues with tax assessments, a longstanding source of frustration with-



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Chiefs chairman and CEO Clark Hunt, left, chats with Royals owner John Sherman before the opening day game at Kauffman Stadium, just days before Election Day.

in Jackson County.

Some state and county leaders have signaled for months that if residents are more confident in the tax assessment process, they’ll be more likely to vote in favor of a future stadium funding package.

One piece of legislation Patterson has highlighted would make Jackson County’s assessor — currently an appointed position — elected. The push comes amid intense outcry from homeowners after a dramatic increase in property assessments in 2023.

“I consider property tax reform part of the deal,” Patterson said. “I think before Jackson Countians sign on to renewing the tax for stadiums, they want to know that something’s being done about the property taxes.”

A spokesperson for Jackson County Executive Frank White Jr. did not respond to a request for comment. But Jackson County Legislator Manny Abarca, in a recent interview, also pointed to the focus on property tax issues in Jefferson City, which he said was needed.

“I think the progress is happening down there,” he said. “Obviously, they need to get everything finalized before the end of session.”

### KANSAS CITY’S OPTIMISM

Despite the lack of movement on the three

stadium funding bills, Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas, who was involved in discussions on the bills, expressed optimism about Missouri’s ability to keep the Chiefs and Royals.

“When the teams are prepared to activate in this session or after, we have no doubt official action to the extent necessary will move swiftly through Missouri’s legislative chambers or administrative agencies at the state and city levels,” Lucas said in an email to The Star.

In the email and a follow-up phone interview, Lucas signaled that Missouri’s efforts would likely include more than just state legislation. He said that there are already tools Missouri can use to keep the teams without legislation, such as the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

Lucas added that he would like to see Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe and state lawmakers work to “expand any tools that allow Missouri to draw revenues generated at sports and entertainment

facilities for the development of updated and new venues.”

Kehoe spokesperson Gabby Picard also referenced the governor’s economic development team in a statement to The Star.

Picard said Kehoe and that economic development team are continuing to have conversations with other elected officials, the Chiefs, Royals and local stakeholders to develop a package “to keep these franchises where they belong—in Missouri.”

As for what the teams want — and whether they plan to leave — Patterson, the Lee’s Summit Republican, acknowledged that he doesn’t know much more than “the average person at this point.”

“I do believe we have the advantage that the teams want to be in Missouri and they want to be at Arrowhead,” he said. “But I don’t think anybody knows for sure.”

*The Star’s Jonathan Shorman contributed reporting.*

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# Trump officials reverse course on student visa cancellations

BY ZACH MONTAGUE  
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration Friday abruptly walked back its cancellation of more than 1,500 student visas held by international students, announcing a dramatic shift by Immigration and Customs Enforcement during a court hearing in Washington.

Joseph F. Carilli, a Justice Department lawyer, said that immigration officials had begun work on a new system for reviewing and terminating visas for international students and that until the process was complete, agencies would not make additional changes or further revocations.

The announcement followed a wave of individual lawsuits filed by students who have said they were notified that their legal right to study in the United States was rescinded, often with minimal explanation. In some cases, students had minor documented traffic violations or other infractions. But in other cases, there appeared to be no obvious cause for the revocations.

It was not clear how many student visa holders had left the country; students usually have at least a few weeks before they have to leave. But the Trump administration had stoked panic among students who found themselves under threat of detention and deportation with minimal explanation. A handful of students, including a graduate student at Cornell University, have voluntarily left the country after abandoning their legal fight.

In March, the Trump administration moved to cancel visas and begin deportation proceedings against a number of students who had participated in demonstrations against Israel during the wave of campus protests last year over the war in the Gaza Strip. Federal judges had halted some of those revocations and slammed the brakes on efforts to remove those students from the country.

But in recent weeks, hundreds of students, including many from India and China, received word that their visas had been revoked. That caused a wave of panic across the country among students and academics whose prospects of finishing a degree or completing graduate research were upended without warning.

A spokesperson for Immigration and Customs Enforcement did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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