



# Bill gives voters power to stop property tax increases

Awaits Kelly  
 veto or signature

By MORGAN CHILSON  
*Kansas Reflector*

The Senate and House narrowly passed a bill giving 10% of registered voters in a taxing area the ability to stop some property tax increases, a move one senator called “tyranny of the minority.”

Both chambers debated House Bill 2745 Friday. It passed the Senate 22-18 and the

House 63-59. It now advances to Gov. Laura Kelly without a veto-proof majority if she decides to reject it as some conservative advocates predict.

Another proposal attempting to change the Kansas Constitution to limit property tax increases was shot down by the House but referred to a conference committee for more discussion. Senate Concurrent Resolution 1603, which needed support from two-thirds of both chambers, failed in the House 59-63.

The resolution, which would have been on the August ballot for voters to decide, limits the assessed valuation of residential, commercial, and agricultural property from jumping more

than 9% in any one year.

**What passed**

HB 2745 was rewritten on the last day of the session by the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation and then passed by the Senate that same day. The speed made changes not only difficult to follow but difficult to get behind, said Rep. Tom Sawyer, a Wichita Democrat.

The bill changed from its first introduction, which passed the House 76-45 on Feb. 26.

“The changes the Senate made, I can’t support this any longer,” Sawyer said. “I think it’s too harsh on cities. We have growing areas. To

not allow new construction, that’s very, very difficult for cities that are growing like my county.”

Under the bill, if any taxing entity, such as a city or county, plans a tax increase higher than the Consumer Price Index averaged from the previous year, or an increase in excess of 3%, then voters can circulate a petition to stop property taxes from going up.

Once 10% of registered voters in the affected taxing district sign the petition, the taxing entity can’t raise taxes and can only pass a rev-

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# Truck Stop Progress



Photo by DAVID A. SEATON

Construction of the truck stop at Kansas Avenue and the U.S. 77 Bypass in Arkansas City is progressing. Called a travel center, the business plans to be branded as a Phillips 66, offering fuel, shopping items and a restaurant, Charleys Cheestakes and Wings. Work started well over a year ago on the project after the City Commission rezoned the property from farming to commercial use in 2021 and later donated the land to the developer, ZABGO Enterprises. Employees at the company on Wednesday could not provide an estimated completion date. City Planner Josh White said he had not been provided a timeline, either.

# Lawmakers overturn Kelly veto of health bills

By KANSAS REFLECTOR

The state Legislature override two vetoes of healthcare-related bills as the 2026 legislative session winds down. On Friday, it reversed Gov. Laura Kelly’s rejection of a bill that provides income tax deductions for Kansans enrolled in healthcare sharing ministries plans, and another bill that grants certain protections to crisis pregnancy centers, such as Family Life Services in Arkansas City, which provide alternatives to abortion.

Area Reps. Webster Roth, Bill Rhiley and Doug Blex, and Sen. Larry Alley, — all Republicans — voted to override both bills.

**Pregnancy Centers**

House Bill 2635 exempts pregnancy centers from regulations that dictate what information, services and resources they can provide on pregnancy, childbirth and parenting

Kelly vetoed the bill saying that Kansans have been clear about not wanting the gov-

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# New meat store slices into Winfield

Expansion of family-owned butcher shop in Grenola

By ADAM CATLIN  
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A new business, Family Tree Meats, is opening in Winfield on Tuesday at 1019 Main, by way of Elk County, according to its owner, Tabitha Brown.

The location, next to Oasis Coffee, is the former site of Snappy Chicks Boutique. Brown said she and her family are leasing the property. They started remodeling and decorating early March, doing most of the work on weekends, and plan to open next week selling a variety of meats.

The Browns have six kids

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Courtesy photo

Tabitha Brown preparing for the opening of Family Tree Meats.

# Firefighters fool around with plane post

By JOHN SHELMAN  
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The Winfield Firefighters Association made an exciting announcement Wednesday through social media. The post included a photo of a plane capable of dropping huge amounts of water to fight fires and another with firefighters dressed as pilots.

“The Winfield Firefighters are proud to announce that we have officially acquired a DHC-515 firefighting aircraft through outside resources,” the post states.

The DHC-515 is a large twin engine amphibious aircraft developed by De Havilland to combat fires. The aircraft has a water capacity of 1,621 gallons with an additional 680 liters of foam. It can refill its tanks in seconds by scooping water from lakes or oceans.

According to the post, the aircraft was acquired from a state wildland fire contractor on the west coast and will be utilized during periods of high wildland fire danger. It will be staffed on peak

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Courtesy photo

The plane the Winfield Firefighters Association claimed to have purchased to help fight fires, before revealing the joke on Tuesday.

# Roof repairs coming to WHS

By JUDITH ZACCARIA  
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The Winfield board of education approved a bid for fixing the high school roof at its meeting on March 25, their second meeting of the month held at Whittier Elementary School.

The second meetings of the month are held at different district facilities to give board members an opportunity to see them up close and to give students, teachers and administrators a chance to share the highlights of their programs.

The approved bid of \$640,450 came from Bloyer

& Sons Inc. of Wichita.

Principal Joe Krumpak and staff provided an overview of programs and activities at the school. These included helping students in their social and emotional learning through the district’s Capturing Kids’ Hearts program, a Buddies program and a reading program.

They also spoke of the kids visiting nursing homes in costume at Halloween and caroling at the nursing homes at Christmas time. “We have a lot of activities as well as classes,” Krumpak said.

Vice president Jalaine Richardson led the board meeting in the absence of president Kinnie Ledford.



Strong, local journalism is the life-blood of a healthy democracy. I appreciate the Courier-Traveler’s commitment to journalistic coverage.

Charles McKenzie



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