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# LEAGUE NEWS



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## 1) Senate to Consider Moving City Elections

Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections passed out favorably S Sub [SB 171](#). The committee made several positive amendments to the bill, including moving city elections from the fall of even years to the fall of odd years. The committee also removed the partisanship requirement. The initial vote to pass the bill out of committee failed. Some senators voted against the bill because they wanted even year, fall elections. Other senators voted “no” because they oppose the entire concept of the bill. Rather than allow the bill to return later in a worse form, the committee reconsidered the motion, and passed the amended bill favorable. S Sub [SB 171](#) will be debated on the Senate floor next week.

The League expects there will be amendments on the Senate floor to move local elections to the fall of even-numbered years and make the elections partisan. We strongly urge you to [contact your Senator](#) and encourage him/her to oppose any such amendment. We also oppose the underlying bill. You can view our talking points [here](#).

Cities have expressed concern about several other provisions of this bill. To make the law uniform, the city manager form of government statutes in K.S.A. 12-1001, *et seq.*, have been replaced by [uniform language](#) permitting cities to adopt or continue to

operate under ordinances or charter ordinances that establish a form of government. Cities that rely on the statutes themselves to define their form of government would be required to take affirmative action to redefine their form of government. Several managers have reached out to the League with concerns that this offers insufficient protections for their form of government. Those who continue to have concerns about the replacement language should contact us as we work to resolve this issue. Also, for cities that hold elections every year, S Sub [SB 171](#) would allow that practice to continue by permitting city elections in the fall of even years.

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## 2) Update on Gun Bills

On Thursday, February 19, the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee held a hearing on [SB 65](#). This bill would prohibit public employers from preventing an employee with a conceal carry license from carrying a concealed handgun outside of a public building while working for the municipality. Under current law municipalities can, with a written personnel policy, prohibit an employee from carrying a firearm in a city vehicle or while working outside even if the individual has a conceal carry license. The League testified in opposition to this bill.

Also on Thursday, the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee amended [SB 45](#) and passed the bill out favorable for passage. [SB 45](#) would legalize the carrying of a concealed handgun without having to get a conceal carry permit. The Committee also amended the bill so that individuals under the age of 21 could not legally conceal carry. The League expects the Senate to debate the bill next week. For additional information or questions, contact [Eric Smith](#), 785-354-9565.

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## 3) Abandoned Property

[SB 84](#), regarding abandoned and blighted property, passed out of Senate Commerce Thursday. Before passage, the bill was amended to tighten the definition of “blighting influence” and to clarify that violations of property maintenance codes fit within the definition of blighting influence. The Committee also amended the bill to include a four-year sunset on the newly added provisions. The League, the City of Topeka, the Unified Government, and the Kansas Realtors Association assisted in crafting the compromise language that the Commerce Committee passed out to the full Senate. For additional information or questions, contact [Larry R. Baer](#), 785-354-9565.

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## 4) Legislative Update Webinar

The legislative session is in full swing, and there are dozens of bills currently being considered that would impact municipalities. The League is hosting a free webinar on March 3 to cover the effect of the proposed legislation and where it is at in the legislative process. You can register for this free webinar [here](#).

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## 5) Voter Turnout Competition

The League is hosting a statewide contest to recognize the cities with the highest percentage of voter turnout in this year's April elections. The rules for the contest are as follows:

- The League will name a winning city for each county in Kansas. To win, a city must have the highest voter turnout in its county. Voter turnout is defined as the percentage of eligible registered who vote in the election. Winners will be announced at the League's Governing Body Institute in Topeka on May 15. Each winning city will be recognized in the *Kansas Government Journal*, on the League's website, and will receive a free registration to a League webinar of the city's choice.
- There will also be three overall winners from the 0-5,000, 5000-20,000, and 20,000+ population categories. Each of those winners will share the cover of a *Kansas Government Journal*.

For tips on increasing voter turnout in your city, see our [article](#) from the January-February issue of the *Kansas Government Journal*.

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## 6) Last Call for Hometown Showdown

*The Hometown Showdown deadline is quickly approaching! Entries will be accepted until February 23 at noon.*

Cities are eligible to go head to head in our photo contest tournament to see whose photo receives the most "likes!" Winners from each round will be chosen based on the number of "likes" the city's photo receives on the [League's Facebook page](#).

Only the first 64 cities entered will be able to participate. The winner will get their photo placed on the cover of the *Kansas Government Journal*. Voting for the round of the first half of 64 will begin the week of February 24. We will announce the winner on the day of the Men's Basketball Championship, April 7.

To register and upload your photo, click [here](#).

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## 7) Kansas Government Journal Survey Deadline Tuesday, February 24

As part of the League's Strategic Plan, we are conducting a survey of our members about the *Kansas Government Journal*. It includes about a dozen questions, and should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Please participate in the survey [here](#). Your feedback will be valuable in shaping future issues of the magazine.

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## 8) KPERS Asks Members to Complete a Survey

KPERS would like to learn the ways it can better serve its members. Please consider completing the survey, which can be found [here](#), to provide this helpful and important information.

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## 9) Other Bills & Upcoming Hearings

Municipal audits - [SB 247](#) is scheduled for hearing in Senate Local Government, Monday, February 23, at 9:00 a.m. [SB 247](#) would increase the amount of annual revenue required to trigger a mandatory city audit from \$275,000 to \$500,000. An audit is still required, regardless of revenue amounts, if the city operates a utility. The League supports [SB 247](#). For additional information or questions, contact [Larry R. Baer](#), 785-354-9565.

Municipal Budgets - [SB 244](#) is scheduled for hearing in Senate Local Government, Monday, February 23, at 9:00 a.m. [SB 244](#) adds new language to K.S.A. 79-2925b, the budget vote provisions that were adopted last session. The language requires publication within 30 days of the adoption of the budget (current law is silent as to timing). The bill also spells out some publication requirements, including how publication should be done when a municipality is located in two or more counties. The bill also adds language to K.S.A. 79-2929 regarding publication of the budget hearing notice. This language is similar to the language in K.S.A. 79-2925b to cover the more than one county situation. The League supports [SB 244](#) because we believe that our cities are now following this procedure. We may be submitting some technical language changes in the interest of getting the two provisions to read more consistently. For additional information or questions, contact [Larry R. Baer](#), 785-354-9565.

Public Building Commission Revenue Bonds - [HB 2296](#) will be heard in House Local Government on Tuesday, February 24, at 1:30 p.m. [HB 2296](#) would amend current law regarding bond issuances by public building commissions (PBC). [HB 2296](#) would require a PBC to hold an election before issuing bonds to build a structure. Current law permits the PBC to authorize the issuance of bonds and then requires an election only if an appropriate protest petition is filed. For additional information or questions, contact [Larry R. Baer](#), 785-354-9565.

## Legislative Activities-February 23-27, 2015

### Monday, February 23

Time	Committee	Location	Bill No.	Topic	Activ
9:00	H, PB	152-S	<a href="#">HB 2250</a>	KPERS retirement cost of living increase	Hea
	S, LG	159-S	<a href="#">SB 244</a>	Municipal budgets; notifications	Hea
	S, LG	159-S	<a href="#">SB 247</a>	Municipal audits	Hea
9:30	S, CJJ	118-N	<a href="#">SB 252</a>	Relating to the unlawful abuse of toxic vapor	Hea
10:30	S, Ju	346-S	<a href="#">SB 230</a>	Increasing the fines for permitting driving in violation of certain restrictions	Hea
12:00	S, WM TrPS Sub Committee	548-S		Department of Transportation - Staff and Agency	Pres
1:30	H, CJJ	152-S	<a href="#">HB 2347</a>	Expungement of traffic infractions for person under 21 years of age	Hea
	H, CLED	346-S	<a href="#">HB 2200</a>	Alcoholic beverages; expansion of retailer's licenses and the transfer thereof	Disc post
3:30	H, Ju	112-N	<a href="#">HB 2289</a>	DUI test refusal or failure; administrative hearing procedure	Hea
	H, Tax	582-N	<a href="#">HB 2169</a>	Sales tax exemption for assistance league of Wichita	Hea

### Tuesday, February 24

Time	Committee	Location	Bill No.	Topic	Activ
9:30	S, CJJ	118-N	<a href="#">SB 222</a>	Creating a hazard; leaving a dangerous weapon in a place accessible to children	Hea

1:30	H, CLED	346-S	<a href="#">HB 2200</a>	Alcoholic beverages; expansion of retailer's licenses and the transfer thereof	Disc poss
	H, CLED	346-S	<a href="#">HB 2267</a>	Alternative project delivery; notice requirements and selection procedures	Disc poss
	H, LG	281-N	<a href="#">HB 2296</a>	Cities and counties; public building commission; revenue bonds; election required	Hea
3:30	S, WM TrPS Sub Committee	546-S		Department of Transportation	

**Wednesday, February 25**

Time	Committee	Location	Bill No.	Topic	Activ
8:30	S, Com	548-S		Rural Opportunity Zones - Chris Harris, Kansas Department of Commerce	Pres
9:30	S, CJJ	118-N	<a href="#">SB 129</a>	Reports of abuse or neglect concerning children and certain adults	Hea

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