

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

***KDHA***

***Kansas Legislative Report***

***December 13, 2021***

A new year is just weeks away, bringing a new legislative session with it. The 2022 Kansas Legislative Session officially begins on Monday, January 10. The new session promises to see plenty of action, tackling several contentious issues in a year where House members, the Governor and statewide officials stand for re-election.

Through the 2021 session, the Legislature was able to convene amid the pandemic largely uninterrupted. Live streaming of committees and floor session provided more access and transparency to legislative action, which will remain in place in 2022. It does appear larger gatherings, including coordinated legislative visits, will return next session, providing a more normal setting.

Traditionally the approval of a budget is the only required action for a legislative session but 2022 adds the task of drawing and approving redistricting maps. Required every ten years to ensure state House, Senate and congressional districts are roughly the same population, Kansas continues to face population shifts from rural to urban areas. This generally results in rural districts growing larger and urban districts smaller, with a handful of districts shifted to the metro areas to account for the population growth. Often contentious for states which draw their own maps, Kansas legislators hope to approve the new maps before session adjourns in May to avoid federal court as seen in 2012. Both chambers have created their own committees to draw and propose maps but this will remain a focal point of the session while other policy issues are discussed. The 2022 primary and general elections will be based on the new maps.

Unlike most sessions of recent memory, the Legislature will not begin the year facing a major budget shortfall. Revenue estimates continue to arrive better than expected, padding a healthy ending balance. While this generally creates opportunities for advocates to create new programs, both Republicans and Democrats have publicly suggested reducing food sales tax is in play for 2022.

The 2021 interim session was the busiest in recent memory, hosting dozens of interim committees meeting throughout the autumn months. Given the interest in numerous policy areas and the fact that most 2021 legislation will become active again on January 10, it is safe to prepare for a busy 2022 session.

This also allows SB 129, known as the Dental Therapist Bill, to become active when session begins. The bill is currently in the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee. SB 129 has already had a hearing so it can technically be considered for action early in the session.

Other industry bills introduced last session will become active again too. This includes SB 121, which proposes to allow the Kansas Dental Board to take disciplinary action against a dental licensee for failing to perform an examination of a patient prior to diagnosing and correcting malpositions of human teeth or initial use of orthodontic appliances. SB 227, which would update the Dental Practice Act, introduced by Oral Health Kansas, will become active. Another bill, HB 2386, aims to establish requirements for the payment and reimbursement of dental services by a dental benefit plan.

Thank you and please let us know if you have any questions.

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