



Dear Friends,

March 11, 2026

***Our NEXT Regular Scheduled KCPR Steering Committee ZOOM meeting will be held on April 8, 2026.***

KCPR conducted its monthly meeting with the following outcomes:

*You will note a bit different format! We would suggest that you assume nothing and read the entire update. Most all the information is new except for the Capitol mailing addresses and the email composition suggestions!*

**INFORMATION YOU HAVE ASKED ABOUT**

1. The remaining scheduled days of the present Kansas Legislative Session are:
  - A. Remainder of this week, March 12 & 13.
  - B. Next week, March 16-20.
  - C. The week of March 23-27. March 27<sup>th</sup> is so called 1<sup>st</sup> Adjournment.
  - D. The Veto Session begins on April 9<sup>th</sup>.
2. Since there are a limited number of days left in the session, should I keep writing my legislators and other suggested contacts? YES! Especially through the veto session. We will announce on our FB page when the session ends. (More explanation on this later in this Update.)
3. Of the 1000 postcards we had printed, we have 200 remaining. If you would like some to distribute, please let me know and we will get you as many as you need!
4. Things can always change, but at this date, SB500, even though it 'sits' in the Financial Institutions and Insurance Senate Committee, it is presently not scheduled to be heard.
5. Some are still concerned about what to communicate.
  - A. First, a dissertation is not necessary!
  - B. The base information we would suggest found on the postcards:
    - a. KPERS retirees and beneficiaries have been 29 years without a permanent benefit increase.
    - b. The legislature gave themselves one after 13 years.
    - c. Some inflation items since last benefit increase:
      - Dozen Eggs cost increased 87%.
      - Gallon of Gas 124% (BTW, this was before the Iran War)
      - Loaf of Bread increase 108%.
      - 1 pound of Ground Beef increased by 255%.

**GENERAL INFORMATION YOU MAY NOT BE AWARE OF**

- I. We as retirees have clout that we often don't recognize.

It is my belief that we could swing the election in our favor. Here is why. KPERS reports that 1 in 9 Kansans are directly impacted by KPERS. The total count of KPERS folks is 350,613; this includes active, inactive, retirees and their beneficiaries. The present population of Kansas is approximately 2.9 Million with approximately 1,975,535 registered voters in the off-year election of 2022. Using the 1 in 9 calculation we *could* represent approximately 18% of the votes. If you include spouses, lovers, children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors we could, even if we just doubled the KPERS numbers, we could easily control 35% of the vote. It appears to me that the leadership in the Kansas House and Senate do not need the retirees and related folks to win their election bids. Please don't go down the 'rabbit hole' arguing about my numbers. You get my point! That is why we must register, vote, and vote in our own best interests.

**II. Legislative Raises**

- A. Legislation 2023 provided the following base raises for Kansas Legislators.
- B. Please note that one of the rationale the Salary Commission used for the pay increase was that it had been 13 years since a raise. In our case it has been 29 years since a permanent rate increase.

**C. Kansas Legislators' Salary**

|                           |                  |   |
|---------------------------|------------------|---|
| a. 2024 --- Base \$22,000 | Average \$30,000 | <i>Last year before the raise became effective.</i> |
| b. 2025 --- Base \$43,000 | Average \$58,000 | Increase of 93%                                     |
| c. 2026 --- Base \$44,900 | Average \$60,500 | Increase COLA of 4.4%                               |

**III. Qualifications for Property Tax Freeze**

You may qualify for Property Tax Relief – This comes about because presently Kansas Does not tax KPERS Benefits or Social Security payments.

To Qualify:

- A. Age/Veteran Status: I was 65 + years old for all of 2025 or I am a 50% or more disable Veteran.
- B. Residency: I owned and lived in my Kansas Home for the entire year of 2025. (Earliest base year that can be used is 2021.)
- C. Home Value: My home was valued at \$350,000 or less in the first year I qualified.
- D. Income: My total 2025 Household Kansas Adjusted Gross Income was \$58,041 or less. [*This is line 3 on your Kansas Tax Return form. With Social Security and KPERS Benefits subtracted your Adjusted Gross Income needs to be \$58,041 or less.*]
- E. *Ernie's experience: If your accountant is using an automated program, it may not be updated with this information. He/she may use the terminology 'Homestead.'*
- F. *If he or you need to call the state for advice call 785-368-8222. Then choose option 4 and then option 3. You may need to wait a bit, but those who answer know what they are talking about.*

G. *The only bad news about this is some legislators are considering this a COLA.*

**IV.** Germane Idea Rep Resman

Our friend Representative John Resman passed away suddenly recently. I sent the following suggestion to 16 Kansas State Senators, 41 Kansas State House members, and Governor Kelly.

The members of KPERS and KP&F who are retired, and their beneficiaries have considered Rep. John Resman a staunch supporter during his service in the Kansas Legislature. A permanent benefit increase has been one of his passions. Since the Kansas House leadership and the Kansas Governor so highly regarded him, it would seem appropriate that he be honored with the passage of some positive KPERS legislation. HB2500 and the identical SB500 as well as HB2380 would offer this opportunity. The KPERS retired, and their beneficiaries have been 29 years without a permanent benefit increase. Please consider passing something positive for the KPERS retired in his honor.

The reason there is still hope AND why we need to keep the 'cards and letters' flowing is because strange things happen at O-dark 30 before the final gavel at Sini Di. There will be Germane Bill that any of our ideas, HB2500, SB500, and HB2380 could be used as amendment or replacement. The message ALSO needs to be sent is that we are looking for helpful candidates in the November elections. This action can serve as a subtle reminder of that plan. [All the Kansas elected officials are up for election except for the Kansas Senate.] Without a lot of home addresses, communications need to continue to be sent through the veto session.

- V.** Keep those Cards and Letters coming! – Referral to John Carson's famous line.
- A. Please keep those postcards and letters, and emails going!
  - B. Here is why: We must keep the pressure up so if they don't do anything this session, we can use the pressure in the upcoming 2026 elections.
    - a. If you have been doing this, DON'T STOP. I would suggest it once a week.
    - b. If you have not, we beg you to START.
    - c. It is known that there is a lot of support out there from many legislators.  
WE CAN NOT LET THIS OPPORTUNITY SLIP AWAY!!

**Communication Suggestions**

1. We now have the duplicate for HB2500 introduced in the Senate (SB500). Senator Billinger introduced the bill in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. It was then assigned to the Senate Committee on Financial Institution and Insurance. [This is the Senate equal of the House Committee on Financial Institutions and Pensions.]
2. There is also a blessed bill lingering in the House Committee on Taxation. It is HB2380. This is the bill I put together which would allow any KPERS Benefit recipient once reaching 85 years of age to receive \$150 monthly benefit increase.
3. The good news is that in the legislative visits (62 this session to date), apart from 2 or 3 have been much more positive than in the past.

4. We have also completed 3 KCPR Table Days with one more before 'turn around' and have been working hard to book March. I have at least 4 possibilities to date.
5. So, What IS the Plan???"
  - We want you to prepare emails for the following and release them on February 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - Your State Senator
  - Your House Member
  - The members of the two appropriate House and Senate Committees. Please push for action on HB2500 and SB500 and HB2380.
  - Write or Email the Speaker of the House who did not allow HB2500 to be heard. Address Below
  - Write or email the President of the Senate who apparently is not allowing HB500 to be heard. Address Below
  - These two apparently don't believe they need the retiree vote to get elected. Speaker Hawkins is running for Insurance Commissioner. Senator Masterson is running for Governor.\_

#### Leadership Addresses

Kansas Speaker the House contact information.

Representative Dan Hawkins

Room 368-W

785-296-2303

[Dan.Hawkins@house.ks.gov](mailto:Dan.Hawkins@house.ks.gov)

Kansas Senate President contact information.

Senator Ty Masterson

Room 332-E

785-296-2419

[Ty.Masterson@senate.ks.gov](mailto:Ty.Masterson@senate.ks.gov)

#### **CAPITOL MAILING ADDRESS**

Kansas State Capitol

300 SW 10th St.

Topeka, Kansas 66612

#### **Find Your Kansas Legislator**

If you do not know, or are not sure, who your Kansas Senator and Representative is, go to [OpenStates.org](http://OpenStates.org). It will ask you what you are looking for and enter legislators. It will next ask for your address, and your Senator and Representative will pop up!!

#### **EMAIL IDEAS**

Jerry Henn, KARSP Executive Director, and I attended an AARP/NRTA (National Retired Teacher Association) conference virtually. One of the presentations was on effective emails. I found it personally very helpful. I am sharing it with you because I believe it would be very helpful to you as well, but also because the emphasis on brevity may relieve some of your

communication fear with your representative in Topeka. This information is very compatible with my comments, "Remember a dissertation is not necessary!" 🐱

#### The Subject Line

- A. The subject line should be limited to about **30 characters**.
- B. Make it time sensitive/urgent if possible.
- C. "Will you please vote [or take some other action] for \_\_\_\_\_."
  - a. "Will you please voice your support for a COLA now!"
  - b. Hopefully, you will be able to use this suggestion later! "Please vote for Bill \_\_\_\_\_ which provides the KPERS retired with a COLA."

#### Email Body

- A. **Make the first sentence and certainly the first paragraph a summary of the rest of the body of the email.**
- B. Remainder of the email body:
  - a. Second Level: In some more detail, **3 to 5** sentences explain in more detail (IF NECESSARY).  
If possible, communicate to the recipient what the problem is, the solution and the action needed.
  - b. Third Level: An option might be to enclose a link to something you want them to look at in greater detail. One example might be: List our website, [www.ksretirees.org](http://www.ksretirees.org) and what you want them to read on the site.

#### Three Cautions:

- 1. Do not try to prove your knowledge of the vocabulary of the English language. 🐱
- 2. Keep the statistics to a minimum!
- 3. **Be brief and concise!!**

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Prepared by Ernie Claudel, KARSP Legislative Chair and KCPR and KARSP Lobbyist and members of the KARSP executive board and KCPR Steering Committee.

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