



Update

Dear Friends,

April 8, 2026

Our NEXT Regular Scheduled KCPR Steering Committee ZOOM meeting will be held on May 13th, 2026.

KCPR conducted its monthly meeting with the following outcomes:

BE SURE TO READ IV. BELOW!

A successful meeting was held today by the KCPR Steering Committee. Here are the outcomes:

- I. Sadly, it appears that there is a very slim chance that something will be done on our behalf in the remaining few days of the Legislative Session. This causes us to focus on the upcoming election. As is indicated below, we want you to keep the phone calls, postcards, emails, and letters flowing.
- II. We have received very positive feedback from our efforts this session. So please don't stop any form of communication with your present legislators or the candidates.
- III. We are very actively planning for next year. We have plans to prepare some very important information during the election cycle.

This is what you can do to help:

1. If you have a local newspaper and would be willing to contact them with a factual editorial this summer:
 - A. Let me know the name of the paper, your city (if not obvious by the name of the publication), the county, and if you are in a KARSP Unit (Incidentally you don't have to be in a KARSP Unit or other organizational unit.) Provide me with your name and contact info, and I will catalogue it and get back to you.
 - B. We are planning to put together an online seminar or zoom meeting to spread the information to other nonaffiliated groups. We have the following covered:
 - a. KARSP, KCPR, KNEA, Retired KNEA, Kansas Counsel of Firefighters, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, AARP Kansas. All of these groups we have regular direct contact with. (PS, I may have forgotten someone, I apologize if I have.)
 - b. Some suggestions from today's meeting were: Keeping the Kansas Promise, League of Women Voters, Silver Haired Legislature, AFL-CIO. If you have contacts with any of these groups, please let me know the group and your contact information.
 - c. As in the previous section, if you know of this type of group, please let me know your contact info. We will get back to you. Please do not forget any formal or informal groups of women who are KPERS recipients. You will recall

that there are more women in KPERS than men and that statistics say that women are more negatively affected by the lack of benefit increase than men.

IV. Qualifications for Property Tax Freeze

Since the dissemination of this information, we have received info from some very happy retirees who found out that they qualified. Refunds we have heard about run from \$500 to \$800!

Further – It came to our attention today that some tax preparers are not aware that when reporting your income to Kansas, your social security payments and KPERS benefits are no longer counted as State income. Be sure you check on your own! The limit for claiming this is April 15th!!

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 disabled 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 as a COLA.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

This is repeated information.

We as retirees have influence 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.

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%

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 18th.
 - 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

Kansas Senate President contact information.

Senator Ty Masterson

Room 332-E

785-296-2419

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. 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 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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