

Veto Session Preview

Kansas lawmakers wrapped up the first part of the 2019 legislative session on April 5 and will return to Topeka on Wednesday, May 1 after a three-week spring break.

Heading into Veto Session, many are predicting it to be short; although with taxes, budget, Medicaid expansion, and an unexpected veto override all still left on the table, it's unclear how they will get their work done so quickly.

First item of business? Probably taxes.

Leadership from both the House and Senate have indicated a desire to address some of the provisions from Senate Bill 22—which the Governor vetoed before break—dealing with the federal tax reform windfall. The trick will be finding the right combination of policies that aren't perceived as tax "cuts" and will be supported by the Administration.

The Consensus Revenue Estimating Group, made up of university economists and state budget officials, met on April 18 to revise the November 2018 State General Fund forecast revenues. They announced that the state is expected to see a \$15 million increase over the next three years. Budget negotiators were in agreement on most items in the omnibus budget bill before leaving for break and should move it out quickly when they return.

One particular political battle, however, could slow everything down. The Senate must vote on a motion made before adjournment to pull the Medicaid expansion bill out of committee and onto the calendar for consideration. The bill narrowly passed the House after an unexpected "gut-and-go" procedure and has been stalled in the Senate Health Committee ever since. It will first require 24 votes to pull the bill out of committee and then 27 votes to force a debate and vote on the floor.

Last but not least is a vote to override the Governor's veto during the break of Senate Bill 67, which requires notification to patients be posted that the effects of a medication abortion may be reversible. The bill "will interfere with the relationship between patients and their physician," Kelly said in her veto explanation. The initial vote in the House was veto-proof. The Senate's was one vote short.

Aside from these major issues, other conference committees can continue to meet, negotiating differences between House and Senate positions on any remaining bills. Monday marks the 74th day of the legislative session. The Governor has signed 56 bills this year, vetoed two, and allowed one to become law without her signature.