



MARCH 2026

The following are the bills that are the Veterans bills still eligible for action in the Kansas Legislature as of 20 February 2026 (**updates bolded**):

**Veteran Claims Assistance Bill
Passed House**

House passed the bill 81-43 on Wednesday February 18, 2026.

Kansas legislators are being asked to enshrine into a state law a policy contrary to federal law. The unfortunate history is that Congress eliminated federal penalties for charging fees to file VA claims in 2006 but did not repeal the prohibition on charging such fees. **We oppose this bill because the bill is a violation of the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution and because passage will result in a reduction in consumer protection for Kansas veterans making claims to the VA.**

All should know:

- No veteran should be charged a fee to make an initial claim for VA benefits under provisions of law in Title 38 U.S. Code
- **Claims assistance at no charge to the veteran is available** from accredited representatives of the Kansas Office of Veterans Services, the American Legion, VFW, and other Veteran Service Organizations
- Kansas Consumer Protection Act prohibits contracts that take "advantage of the inability of the consumer reasonably to protect the consumer's interests because of the consumer's **physical infirmity, ignorance,** illiteracy, inability to understand the language of an agreement or similar factor"
- Kansas Consumer Protection Act prohibits contracts where "the price grossly exceeded the price at which similar property or services were readily obtainable in similar transactions by similar consumers"
- Kansas Consumer Protection Act in K.S.A. 50-676(g) specifically defines who is protected:
 - (g) "Protected consumer" means:
 - (1) An elder person;
 - (2) a disabled person;**
 - (3) a veteran;**
 - (4) the surviving spouse of a veteran;**
 - (5) a member of the armed forces; and
 - (6) an immediate family member of a member of the armed forces.

**Federal Judge Rules Louisiana's
Veteran Claims Assistance Bill Unconstitutional**

Adding to the argumentation against **HB 2214**, a similar state law in Louisiana (LA REV STAT § 29:296) was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge on February 6, 2025 for two reasons: 1) the law

improperly restrained the First Amendment rights of individuals and businesses accredited by the VA for claims assistance and 2) the law was found to violate the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution because LA REV STAT § 29:296 “obstructs Congress’s intent that veterans have access to authorized, qualified private representatives to assist them in pursuing claims for VA benefits.” The judge’s ruling concluded “The Court finds that the Act, as written, necessarily impedes the realization of Congress's goal of ensuring that veterans have access to qualified representatives to assist them in pursuing claims for VA benefits, in violation of the Supremacy Clause” of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution. **Contradiction of federal law by state law is unconstitutional.**

Other Veteran Claims Assistance Bills

VFW and MOAA collaborated to file two new bills on claims assistance that conform Kansas law to the federal prohibitions on fees for initial claims of veterans and explicitly link related prohibited practices to violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act. These identical bills are **HB 2646** and **SB 433**. No further action will be taken on these bills.

House Passes Employment Preferences for Reservists, National Guard and Spouses

HB 2626 would expand veterans preference in government employment to include current members of the national guard and such members' eligible spouses. On February 12, the House Veterans and Military Committee approved this bill with minor amendments. The amended bill is not yet posted on the legislature’s web site. **Bill passed 118-4** on Thursday February 19, 2026.

HB 2627 would expand preference in private employment to include current reserve component service members and such members' spouses.

On February 12, the House Veterans and Military Committee approved this bill with minor amendments. The amended bill is not yet posted on the legislature’s web site. **Bill passed 111-1** on Thursday February 19, 2026.

Death Certificate Bill

HB 2732 creates a new vital statistics record for the state of Kansas. This record of service-connected veterans would assist cause of death certifiers to better assist survivors seeking Dependency and Indemnity Compensation claims from the VA. Such claims are paid at ~\$1,700 per month, federal and state tax-free. Some potential claimants are unaware of DIC and this bill would help more entitled widows gain this valuable federal benefit. **Bill passed 119-3** on Thursday February 19, 2026.

HB 2331

This bill concerns desecration of cemeteries and the disposition of human remains. There are special provisions for remains of veterans who die without next-of-kin. The bill was amended and **passed the Senate 38-0** on February 5th. FYI, Kansas statute 73-304 does not permit pauper burials for honorably discharged veterans.

No Action to Urge KTA to Waive Tolls for Gold Star, Disabled Veterans and Valor Medalists

House Resolution 6024 was referred the Transportation Committee. **HR 6024** urges the Kansas Turnpike Authority to waive tolls for vehicles displaying Kansas special license plates related to injury, loss of life or valor in active military service. There are 25 co-sponsors. No further action will be taken on this session.

Senate Approves Purple Heart and Homeless Veterans Identification Bills

Senate Select Committee on Veterans Affairs chaired by Senator Mike Thompson met and approved **HB 2274** which would establish alternative methods for Homeless Veterans to gain state identification and would establish August 7 as Purple Heart Day in Kansas. The bill awaits Senate floor action. **Bill passed** the Senate 40-0 on Wednesday February 18, 2026.

SB 434 Hearing Set in House Taxation Committee

Senate approved and sent to the house **SB 434** which would ensure equal treatment in the Kansas tax code for veterans with a medical retirement from active duty under Title 10 U.S. Code Chapter 61 authority with veterans determined to have a disability by the VA under Title 38 U.S. Code Chapter 11 authority. **SB 434** will be heard in House Taxation on February 25, 2026.

Taxation Bills

HB 2005 would reduce property taxes for service-connected veterans. HB 2005 was returned to the House Taxation Committee for amendments desired by House leadership. Meanwhile, **HB 2036** would reduce income taxes on currently serving troops. This bill remains in House Taxation Committee. On July 1, 2026 a sales tax exemption for 100% service-connected veterans goes into effect. Expect implementation information soon. **SB 201** would provide for a property tax exemption and is unlikely to advance this session. **HB 2074** would grant property tax reduction to DIC-recipient surviving spouses and service-connected veterans who rent their residence. **SB 378** would provide a one-time, nonrefundable vehicle registration property tax credit for eligible vehicles. **HB 2632** is a property tax bill increasing the household income and the appraised value thresholds for eligibility of seniors and disabled veterans; amending K.S.A. 2025 Supp. 79-4508a. **HB 2385** is unlikely to move out of the Taxation Committee.

2026 Sub. for HB 2454 Appropriates KOVS Funding

Bill summary can be viewed here:

https://kslegislature.gov/li/b2025_26/measures/documents/bill_exp_hb2434_01_0000.pdf

The funding amounts listed below are state general fund (SGF) appropriations. KOVS receives federal funds from the VA and the Department of Health and Human Services as well. Major lines of effort are proposed to be funded as follows:

- Operating administration \$1.47 million [\$1.55 million in HB 2455 / SB 337]
- Veteran Services operations \$1.85 million
- [Fort Dodge] Soldiers Home \$4.89 million
- [Winfield] Veterans Home \$5.41 million
- Cemeteries \$1.10 million [Fort Riley, WaKeeney, Winfield, & Fort Dodge]
- Veterans Claim Assistance Program \$1.00 million

Occupational Licensing Bills

These bills are sought by the Pentagon's Defense-State Liaison Office and seek to lower unemployment of spouses and other military family members.

- **HB 2533** for Occupational Therapists **approved by House** and referred to Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

- **HB 2534** for Respiratory Therapists **approved by House** and referred to Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
- **HB 2266** for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses is awaiting a hearing
- **HB 2760** for Estheticians **approved by House 122-0** on Thursday February 19, 2026.
- **HB 2763** for Athletic Trainers **approved by House 116-0** on Thursday February 19, 2026.

The following bill is not a Pentagon Defense-State Liaison Office initiative.

- **SB 30** would require that adoption of new **occupational licensing** requirements and material changes to existing occupational licenses by a state agency be approved by joint resolution of the legislature unless otherwise ratified by the legislature by the enactment of a bill and providing for notice to agencies and the legislature and a procedure for legislative review of such occupational licensing requirements. (This bill is not a Defense-State Liaison-sponsored bill.) **House approved the conference committee report 89-35** on Monday February 16, 2026.

Defend the Guard Act

HB 2188 and **SB 38** create the defend the guard act to establish when the Kansas national guard may be released into active-duty combat. These bills would greatly diminish, if not eliminate the Kansas National Guard role in national security missions under Title 10 US Code. No further action is likely this session on these bills.

HB 2767

Bill would establish the Kansas Military Affairs Commission, replacing the Governor's Military Council. House Veterans and Military has the bill for consideration. Among the Commission's duties would be to provide advice, counsel and actionable recommendations on military-affiliated issues and economic and industrial development related to the military to the governor, state and federal agencies, the legislature, communities and the state's congressional delegation. Also, build community support for the armed services and prepare and maintain a strategic action plan that protects existing military missions in Kansas and positions the state to be competitive for new and increasing military missions. Hearing is set for Thursday February 26 at 9:00 a.m. in room 281-North.

HB 2758

Bill requires the Capitol Preservation Committee to develop and approve plans for a registry kiosk of Kansas military forces killed in action or who died of wounds incurred during active duty. **Bill passed 121-1** on Thursday February 19, 2026.

SB 307

Bill requires veterans with a condition from military service to be offered diversion in the state judicial system for certain offenses. This bill offers a definition of veteran that is significantly different than K.S.A. 73-1245(a)(3). Veterans with "one or more indicators of mental or physical symptoms of a condition from military service that could have contributed to the offense, including the psychological effects from the veteran's time in service or the period of family separation related to deployment and any previously or provisionally diagnosed substance use, mental health disorder or neurocognitive disorder" would be eligible for diversion under provisions in the bill.

SB 363

Bill tightens eligibility for public assistance and removes veterans aged 18-64 (among other categories of individuals) as eligible for exemption from time limits for food assistance welfare benefits. Bill remains alive this session as the Senate Committee on Ways and Means now has the bill.

HB 2354

Bill would provide a service-connected veteran with a valid medical marijuana card from another state an exception to marijuana possession criminal prohibitions of the state of Kansas. No hearing has been set.

HB 2471, HB 2579 & HB 2615

Highway Memorialization

HB 2471 passed the House and was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. Bill would change the memorialization of **a portion of I-35** from the 35th Infantry Division Memorial Highway to the deputy Sam Smith Memorial Highway. Also, **HB 2579 passed the House** and was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee. Bill would designate a portion of Highway K-49 for a Vietnam KIA as the PVT Michael E. Gerber memorial highway. **HB2615** would designate a portion of U.S. HWY 75 as the BG George Wark Memorial Hwy and redesignate a current portion of the purple heart/combat wounded veterans hwy for U.S. Hwy 75. **Bill passed House 123-0** and moves forward for Senate consideration in the Senate Transportation Committee.

Landlord-Tenant Bills

HB 2504 passed the House 84-40. Bill referred to Senate Commerce Committee. Bill would prohibit discrimination by landlords on the basis of receipt of veterans benefits. **HB 2454** modifies landlord-tenant relations for real property. For veterans, the bill's intent would require landlords to consider disability compensation and other veteran financial benefits as qualifying income. Currently, these veteran financial benefits are not taxable income under the federal IRS Code and the federal government does not issue a Form W-2 for these payments. Without a W-2, landlords may draw an incorrect inference as to the financial strength of a veteran and thereby erroneously disqualifying the veteran from a favorable lease decision. The bill has been referred to Federal and State Affairs Committee.

Family Advocacy MOU with Kansas DCF

HB 2243 requires Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish Memoranda of Understanding with major military installations in Kansas. When military-affiliated children in need of care come to the attention of DCF, DCF will, according to MOU, collaborate with Military Family Advocacy Office to ensure all services of Kansas and the military are available to support the family involved. **Bill passed the House** on February 11 and is with Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration.

BOYS STATE: This year's dates are May 31 – June 6, 2026. Applications are due March 31, 2026. The 2026 session marks the 89th Anniversary of this outstanding program. Boys State DVDs are available free of charge to Posts and a video is available on the website. This twelve-minute video highlights activities during the week of Boys State and features testimonials from several of the States themselves. They are both excellent recruitment tools for your Boys State Coordinator. You can order your copy or additional applications by calling the Boys State Office toll free at 785-550-6492 or online at www.kansasboysstate.org.

CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY: Applications are due March 31, 2026. This year's dates are June 1 – 5, 2026. For applications or more information contact Department Headquarters or our website www.kansaslegion.org.

DISTRICT CONVENTIONS: Attend and elect good officers who will represent your District in the 2026-2027 membership year. Dates and locations for this year are: **District I** – Topeka Post 400, April 11; **District II** – Gardner, March 14; **District III** – Independence, March 13-15; **District IV** – Hillsboro, March 14; **District V** – McPherson, March 21; **District VI** – Concordia, April 25; **District VII** – Great Bend, March 21; **District VIII** – Dodge City, April 18; **District IX** – Bird City, April 18; **District X** – Frankfort, April 25 and **District XI** – Abilene Post 39, April 11.

POST ELECTIONS are the most important in the Legion. Elections of Post Officers must be held not more than sixty days or less than fifteen days prior to the Department Convention which begins on May 29, 2026. This year those dates are April 1 and May 16. Elect responsible and qualified leaders who will represent you and your Post. The Names and Addresses of those elected to the office of Commander and Adjutant **must be reported** to Department Headquarters as soon as elected. A printed form is enclosed. (There is also a fillable form on www.kansaslegion.org at Member Services – Post Tools – Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants). All Posts are required to submit this report even if they haven't changed. Send this completed Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutant report to the Department Headquarters as soon as possible and we then forward it on to National.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Legionnaires have until May 1 to be certified for “Go-Getter” and “Big Team (10 new members and 25 new members respectively). These awards cannot be sent out correctly unless we have updated figures in this office. Certification forms are available at Department Headquarters for the “Gold Brigade” (50 or more NEW members) and the “Silver Brigade” (25 to 49 NEW members). Certification forms for the Gold and Silver Brigade are due at Department Headquarters May 1, 2026.

SPECIAL CHILDREN & YOUTH CERTIFICATE is still available to recognize a young person in your community. Any outstanding youth in any program that is available (Scouting, 4-H, or other Community service or religious group). Send Department Headquarters the name and organization in which they participate. (There is also a fillable form on www.kansaslegion.org at Member Services – Post Tools – Special Children & Youth Certificate).

DISTRICT STANDINGS AS OF FEBRUARY 20, 2026: District IV, 924 – 93.33%; District II, 2,789 – 91.29%; District III, 1,519 – 90.52%; District I, 1,806 – 89.01%; District V, 2,071 - 87.49%; District XI, 1,400 - 87.17%; District VI, 1,013 - 86.88%; District X, 880 – 85.11%; District VII, 1,075 - 81.25%; District IX, 665 – 80.41% and District VIII, 537 – 80.15%. Department Headquarters Post 58 (included in Dept. total) is 985. Total membership is 15,685. Membership last year on this date was 16,038. We are BEHIND 353 members.

IN ORDER TO AVOID RECEIVING THE NEXT RENEWAL NOTICE ALL PAID MEMBERS' CARDS MUST BE IN THIS OFFICE BY APRIL 9, 2026.



THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants

Department of _____

Post No. _____

Date _____

POST COMMANDER

Enter Member ID #

Incumbent

Newly Elected/Appointed

Name

Phone

Cell

Home

Work

Email

POST ADJUTANT

Enter Member ID #

Incumbent

Newly Elected/Appointed

Name

Phone

Cell

Home

Work

Email

(Complete this section if Post has an SAL Squadron.)

SQUADRON COMMANDER

Enter Member ID #

Incumbent

Newly Elected/Appointed

Name

Phone

Cell

Home

Work

Email

SQUADRON ADJUTANT

Enter Member ID #

Incumbent

Newly Elected/Appointed

Name

Phone

Cell

Home

Work

Email

SIGNATURE OF POST ADJUTANT