



## WHITNEY B. DAMRON, P.A.

919 South Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 224-6666  
[wbdamron@gmail.com](mailto:wbdamron@gmail.com)  
[www.wbdpa.com](http://www.wbdpa.com)

TO: City of Topeka Governing Body

**CITY OF TOPEKA**

FROM: Whitney Damron

RE: 2023 Legislative Session Recap; Interim; 2024

DATE: June 20, 2023

The Kansas Legislature opened the 2023 session on Monday, January 9 and adjourned sine die on Friday, April 28. In between we saw 800 bills introduced along with a number of proposed amendments to the Kansas constitution and resolutions.

Of those bills that made it to the Governor's desk, a record number were vetoed with the Legislature and Governor each winning about 50% of the time on veto overrides or sustainment of a veto.

As for the City of Topeka, we saw success with the City's stated agenda as well as city-related legislation we took a position on, as follows:

### **COT Priorities.**

- HB 2059 is the Common Consumption bill proposed by the City of Topeka. Signed.
- HB 2216, the driving while suspended bill the City. Signed.
- HB 2336 increases the bonding authority for the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority. Signed.
- HB 2346 contains language that provides for a distinctive City of Topeka license plate. Signed.
- HB 2092 that amends the way membership of the Washburn University Board of Regents. Signed.

The City also provided testimony and successfully worked against passage of a handful of bills identified as being against the City's interests, including:

- Repeal sales tax on food for local units of government.
- Property tax exemption for health clubs, restaurants, and childcare facilities.
- Vacant property registry.
- Preclude planning and zoning in the 3-mile area around a city (extraterritorial zoning).
- Allow nonresidents to vote on municipal tax policy.
- State preemption legislation (e.g., plastic bags, lawful products, etc.).
- Partisan/nonpartisan local elections.

In addition, testimony was provided in support of or neutral on several topics, including:

- Homeless legislation.
- Legal publication requirements; internet publication.
- Asset forfeiture.

#### **Other matters.**

- The demolition of the Docking State Office Building and construction of a new KDHE lab are both ongoing in the downtown area.

The Kansas Legislature will return in 2024 on Monday, January 8. In the meantime, on June 5 the Legislative Coordinating Council announced interim committees and study topics with committee members to be named in the coming weeks. While a handful of those committees often touch upon issues of interest to municipalities (e.g., tax, commerce), at this writing there does not appear to be specific issues that the City of Topeka would take a formal position on.

In August-September the League of Kansas Municipalities will host workshops to develop its 2024 legislative agenda and the City of Topeka will be a participant in those efforts.

As for 2024, we can expect to see a number of bills vetoed and sustained by the Governor to be back for further consideration. In addition, Republican leadership has indicated a flat or one-rate state income tax remains a priority. Republicans were stymied by the Governor this year who vetoed a major tax package that included a 5.15% state rate, resulting in adjournment without any significant tax bills making it into the statute books during a time when the State has \$3 billion or more in excess funds.

In general terms, the 2023 session was by and large successful for cities and counties and for the City of Topeka, we were able to advance the issues outlined in the City's stated priorities.

WBD