

## News from the Capitol



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### 2021 Legislative Update Week #10

March 15 - March 19, 2021

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### [HotJobs](#)

The new Manhattan/Junction City area Hot Jobs list may be found [here](#). They are also holding state-wide virtual job fairs.



### [Honor Some Teens](#)

#### **OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE TEENS IN YOUR COMMUNITY WITH \$5K**

Join the Invisalign® brand in their search for **100** deserving teens dedicated to making a difference in their communities to be recognized as Invisalign® ChangeMakers!

Each of these teens will be celebrated at a virtual event and awarded **\$5,000 cash** to fund their service projects or help support their educational or personal goals. Help us celebrate those making a difference by sharing with the teens and parents in your life!

[All teens ages 13 – 19 can apply now through March 31, 2021 by sharing how they're creating positive change in their communities, schools and world.](#)

### [Update](#)

On Monday, the Governor announced an update on the vaccine rollout plan. Starting March 22nd, we entered phases 3 and 4 of the plan with the hope that we will transition into phase 5 by May 1st. On the House side, we were on the floor Monday through Thursday and within those four days we addressed and took action on fifteen bills. Among those fifteen bills were Conference Committee Report [SB 40](#) which was a compromised version of KEMA between House and Senate and [HB 2089](#) which would standardize firearm safety education

training programs in school districts. In the next coming week, there is a possibility that we could see a few controversial bills on the House floor which could include [SB 208](#) (Anti-Trans Bill), [HB 2119](#) (School Voucher Bill), and [HB 2421](#) (Brownback 2.0).

### **[Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance \(KERA\)](#)**

Governor Kelly has announced the launch of the [Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance Program \(KERA\)](#). KERA will provide financial assistance to eligible households for the payment of:

- Residential rent and rental arrears from April 1, 2020 to current, up to 12 months (or 15 months if necessary) to ensure the household's housing stability.
- Up to three months of prospective rent at a time, even if the household does not have arrears.
- Past due residential utility and home energy (electric, gas, sewer, water, and trash services) and internet costs incurred since April 1, 2020.

This uses \$200 million of federal dollars sent to Kansas from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021. The program will be administered by the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation. It requires both tenants and landlords to enroll and accept the programs terms and conditions.

Eligible Households must meet the following criteria to qualify ([full details found here](#)):

- COVID-19 Hardship
- Risk of homelessness or housing instability
- Income Eligibility
- Household is renting (rent to own agreements will not qualify)
- Proof of Identification

### **[Kansas Department of Labor \(KDOL\) Update](#)**

#### **Fraud Software Security Weekly Updates (Numbers are of 3/16/21)**

- Total claimants attempting authentication: approximately 163,500.

- Claimants waiting for user action: approximately 33,500.
- Those claimants who were proofed/approved: approximately 81,000.
- Those who have failed their ID proofing and would need to do it again/get help: approximately 48,500
- Those who experienced an error of some sort: approximately 335.
- In terms of BOTS and fraudulent login attempts, we have stopped approximately 6.29M.
- The number of deprovisioned users: approximately 11,400.
  - Deprovisioned users are deactivated accounts that are confirmed fraudulent.

### **Weekly Claim Totals**

- As of the week ending 03/13/21, initial and continued claims for PUA are 16,948.
- As of the week ending 03/13/21, initial and continued claims for PEUC are 13,003.
- As of the week ending 03/13/21, initial and continued claims for Regular UI are 20,235.
- As of the week ending 03/13/21, regular unemployment insurance payments totaled \$7,426,242.
- As of the week ending 03/13/21, federal program payments totaled \$35,025,146.

### **Weekly Trust Fund Numbers**

- The trust fund balance for the week of 03/13/21 is at \$258.2M, the week before (03/06/21), the balance was \$264.9M. For the week 03/14/20 the balance was \$987.0M, a -73.8% drop year-over-year.

### **Weekly Call Center Volume**

- From 03/08/21 – 03/16/21, the total number of unique calls per day into the KDOL contact center was 253,434.

### **Resources**

- Report Fraud Website - <https://www.dol.ks.gov/fraud>.

- Get Kansas Benefits - <https://www.getkansasbenefits.gov/Home.aspx>.
- Unemployment Insurance Benefits Self Service Portal - <https://uiassistance.getkansasbenefits.gov/>.

Since March 15, 2020 KDOL has paid out over 4.1 million weekly claims totaling over \$2.7 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to [www.GetKansasBenefits.gov](http://www.GetKansasBenefits.gov).

### **American Rescue Plan Act**

The Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) is currently reviewing the unemployment extension provisions contained in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP). These extended provisions will provide additional unemployment compensation to unemployed Kansans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency is waiting on guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) on the ARP extensions in Kansas. KDOL's team is doing as much work as possible to implement these extensions. However, the agency may not be able to issue payments under the new legislation until guidance is received from USDOL.

The relevant programs and changes include:

- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)
  - Will provide up to an additional 29 times an individual's calculated weekly benefit amount to a maximum of 53 times an individual's calculated weekly benefit amount.
  - The program will be extended through 09/06/21.
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
  - Will provide up to an additional 29 weeks of benefits to a maximum of 79 weeks.
  - The program will be extended through 09/06/21.
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

- The program will be extended through 09/06/21.

### **KDOL's Antiquated Technology**

How do you explain this old technology to someone?

KDOL's unemployment legacy system was deployed in the 1970s. For a system this old, KDOL must work with developers who can write in the COBOL VSAM program language, and there simply is not enough talent available in the marketplace to move quickly on this technology platform. This dearth of available expertise extends the timeline and rollout of federal benefit programs.

An effort to modernize the system was launched under the Sebelius Administration and was subsequently stopped under the Brownback Administration in 2011. Because of this decision, much of the initial work to modernize was lost and has compounded our problems today.

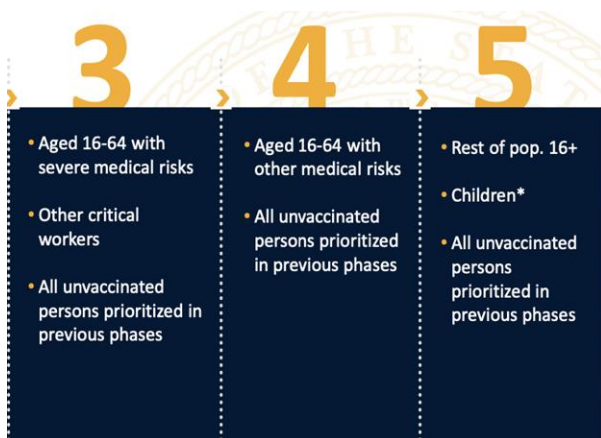
Modernizing the KDOL IT system is going to take time. There is not an "off the shelf" option for unemployment systems. However, we have completed our modernization plan, and once the legislature funds the project, we expect to put it out to bid later this year. We could start our modernization work later this year.

If you do not invest in infrastructure, whether that be a road or technology, it will not be there when you need it most. Technology is no different from investing in the roads you drive on every day. If you do not repair or replace them, then eventually they become difficult to navigate if not completely unusable.

### **Governor Kelly's Press Conference**

Governor Kelly announced on Monday that on March 22nd we would go into phase 3 and 4 of the vaccine rollout plan. She also mentioned that the hope is by May 1st we will be able to transition into phase 5. **Below are the three phases.**

Below are a list of those who will be eligible to be vaccinated under Phase 3 and 4: Those aged 16 through 64 with conditions that increase the risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including:



- Cancer;
- Down Syndrome;
- Certain heart conditions;
- Type 1 & 2 diabetes;
- Pregnancy;
- Asthma;
- Cystic fibrosis;
- Liver disease;
- Neurological conditions like dementia;
- And other medical risks.

And other non-health care workers in critical infrastructure who cannot work remotely, including:

- Agricultural and food workers not included in previous phases;
- Workers performing in-person activities indoors;
- Utility workers;
- Social service and government workers not included in previous phases;
- Logistics workers, such as truck transportation workers and couriers;
- Water and wastewater workers;
- Shelter, housing, and finance workers;
- And information technology and communication workers.

### [Final Action](#)

This week we voted on 15 bills. You will find links to the relevant bills, the final vote totals, and my vote below:

- [HB 2219](#) - Enacting the Kansas targeted employment act to provide tax credits for the employment of persons with developmental disabilities. (123-1, Yea)
- [HB 2287](#) - Establishing the Kansas promise scholarship act to provide scholarships to students who attend postsecondary educational programs that correspond to high-need career fields. (115-9, Yea)
- [SB 235](#) - Enacting the back-to-school act to require school districts to provide a full-time, in person attendance option for all students beginning on March 26, 2021. (55-69, Nay)
- [HB 2094](#) - Substitute for HB 2094 by Committee on Appropriations - Expanding educational benefits of tuition and fees waiver for spouses and dependents of public safety officers and personnel who are injured or disabled while performing service-related duties. (117-6, Yea)
- [HB 2339](#) - Expanding the crime of election tampering to include changing or altering votes cast, manipulating computer hardware or software or vote tabulation methods or producing false vote totals. (122-1, Yea)
- [HB 2248](#) - Increasing state financial assistance to local health departments under specified circumstances. (111-12, Yea)
- [HB 2021](#) - Authorizing the issuance of bonds for the construction of a state veterans home. (121-2, Yea)
- [SB 40](#) - would create and amend law regarding the Kansas Emergency Management Act (KEMA), state of disaster emergencies, the Legislative Coordinating Council, and the COVID-19 health emergency. (118-5, Yea)
- [HB 2089](#) - Standardizing firearm safety education training programs in school districts. (75-47, Nay)
- [HB 2236](#) - Authorizing exclusion of the sales comparison approach in mortgage financing appraisals of certain unique residential real property in rural counties. (122-0, Yea)
- [SB 77](#) - Enacting the audiology and speech-language pathology interstate compact. (119-3, Yea)
- [SB 178](#) - Providing for trust company charter conversions. (121-1, Yea)
- [HCR 5013](#) - Urging congress to propose the "keep nine" amendment to the United States constitution to prohibit expanding the number of justices on the United States supreme court. (84-38, Nay)
- [HB 2415](#) - Providing the state fire marshal with law enforcement powers and requiring an investigation of deaths resulting from fire. **Failed on division vote 38-78.**



- [SB 170](#) -Making permanent provisions for the advisory committee on trauma and the statewide trauma system regional council to conduct closed meetings and keep privileged records regarding trauma cases. (98-23, Nay)

### [Looking Ahead](#)

In the next coming weeks there is a possibility that we could see very controversial bills on the floor. These controversial bills could include [SB 208](#) (Anti-Trans Bill), [HB 2119](#) (School Voucher Bill), and [HB 2421](#) (Brownback 2.0). All three of these bills are horrible! SB 208 takes rights away from the Transgender community; HB 2119 diverts taxpayer dollars away from public schools and gives it to private schools; and HB 2421 gives tax relief to giant multinational corporation rather than working families.

### [Keep In Touch](#)

It is a special honor to serve as your State Representative. I value and need your input on the various issues facing our community and the state government. Please contact me with your comments and questions.

My office address is Room 451-S, 300 SW 10th Street, Topeka, KS 66612.

You may reach my office at (785) 296-7657, or the legislative hotline (800) 432-3924 to leave a message.

[Email](mailto:sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov) at [sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov](mailto:sydney.carlin@house.ks.gov)

Please follow [my legislative activity](#) or the [entire session](#).


**Thank you!**

*Sydney Carlin*

## Sydney Carlin - 66th District Representative

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