



# 2019 Legislative Priorities

**Kansas Interfaith Action** is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that *puts faith into action* by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social, economic, and climate justice issues.

KIFA members are shaped by the values of our diverse faiths, which connect us to an age-old concern for justice, peace, and human dignity. Rooted in faith, we join hands across difference to work for moral public policy in Kansas. We take as our starting point the “four evils” of systemic racism / discrimination, economic injustice, violence, and climate disruption. Every item on our legislative agenda is in one of these four categories. For more details please visit [kansasinterfaithaction.org/about](http://kansasinterfaithaction.org/about).

**Economic Justice** - Kansas Interfaith Action believes that everyone has the right to adequate and healthy food, water, housing, and healthcare. Government has a vital role to play in making sure that working people are treated fairly, and that those less fortunate are cared for.

- **Expansion of KanCare** would help about 150,000 working Kansans access affordable healthcare. This measure is long overdue and is our highest legislative priority for the 2019 session.
- **Development of a robust economic justice agenda.** Welfare reform (the so-called “HOPE Act”) has had significant negative consequences, including contributing to the increased load on the foster care and child welfare system. KIFA believes that an anti-poverty agenda must include supports to help people succeed in their transition from poverty to self-sufficiency. Elements include:
  - ◇ Increased minimum wage
  - ◇ Paid family leave for all Kansans
  - ◇ Addressing the regressive impact of the sales tax on food on poor and working people

**Discrimination and Systemic Racism** - KIFA believes that we are all created in God’s image, and that everyone has the right to equal protection under the law. No one should be targeted or vilified for their identity.

- **Criminal and civil justice reform.** Like most states, Kansas has significant racial disparities in enforcement and sentencing. We will continue to pursue efforts to redress these imbalances. KIFA is part of the Smart Justice Coalition; priorities this year include:
  - ◇ Standardization of diversion practices across the state, including notification and reporting
  - ◇ Decriminalizing small-scale drug offenses, including releasing and expunging the records of those previously caught up in the disastrous war on drugs
  - ◇ The return of all private property seized by police upon acquittal or if there is no prosecution
- **Voting rights** - We hold it as self-evident that everyone who has the right to vote in Kansas should be allowed and encouraged to vote. KIFA is part of the Kansas Coalition for Citizen Participation. Priorities this year include:
  - ◇ Establishing same-day voter registration
  - ◇ Expanding and standardizing early voting across the state
  - ◇ Repealing Kansas' voter suppression (“documentary proof of citizenship”) law
- Kansas’ **hate crimes law** is ineffective and rarely utilized. We will work to amend it to give judges the ability to consider bias as an aggravating factor when considering prison sentences.

**Gun violence** - The radical loosening of Kansas' gun laws over the past 10 years has led to an marked increase in suicides, homicides, gun-related accidents, and the use of weapons in acts of domestic violence. KIFA will

- oppose any efforts to further loosen gun laws, such as by forcing school districts to allow teachers to carry firearms
- support the passage of a “red flag” law, permitting police or family members to petition a state court to order the temporary removal of firearms from a person who may present a danger to others or themselves
- Support returning the right of municipalities and universities to decide for themselves when to prohibit the carrying of firearms in public places

**Climate disruption** - Human-caused climate disruption is already affecting Kansans, and will continue to disproportionately impact the health and well-being of those least responsible for causing the problem and with the least resources to deal with it. ***Climate change is a moral issue***, directly bearing upon our responsibility to care for Creation. It is vital that we ***take steps now*** to protect Kansans – particularly the less fortunate – from the worsening impacts of climate disruption.

We call on the Kelly Administration and the state legislature to ***develop a Climate Action Plan that will***

- Innovate vigorously in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Build resilience in Kansas to the effects of climate change, including fully funding the state water plan; and support the use of more Kansas farm acreage for production of food for consumption, rather than for commodities
- Address via legislation the Kansas Corporation Commission's rejection of all proposed efficiency measures, and the punitive costs on distributed generation it has allowed investor-owned utilities to impose on Kansas ratepayers
- We call for Kansas' carbon emissions across all sectors to be lowered by 50% by 2030, with a goal of making Kansas' economy 95% carbon-free by 2050. This timeframe is in keeping with what science tells us is the urgent need to move away from fossil fuels, and will unleash innovation and economic opportunity across the state

### Upcoming events:

January 15—People's State of the State (Kansas People's Agenda)

January 24—Voting Rights Lobby Day (Kansas Coalition for Citizen Participation)

February 7—KIFA Advocacy Day

February 14—Smart Justice Lobby Day

March 12—WEALTH Day (Climate & Energy Project)

***Putting faith into action...***