

## State Representative Tells What to Expect During 2021 Legislative Session

By: Murrel Bland

State Rep. Tom Burroughs (D-33rd Dist.) offered a preview of what the 2021 Kansas legislative session may look like when it convenes the second week in January. He spoke to about 60 members of the Congressional Forum via ZOOM Friday, Dec. 18. The Forum is a committee of the Kansas City, Kansas, Area Chamber of Commerce.

Although tax revenue will be an issue, Rep. Burroughs said legislators did get some good news—that the state has from \$700 million to \$800 million more in revenue than anticipated.

Rep. Burroughs said the legislature will be dominated by conservative Republicans, more so than last term.

Among the issues that Rep. Burroughs expects to be debated include congressional and state reapportionment. He said he hoped that legislators can come up with an acceptable plan. The last redistricting, some ten years ago, ended up in federal district court. He said that he favored a plan in which a bipartisan commission would draw district lines. The federal 2020 census will be used as the basis for redistricting.

Property taxes will be

another issue. Small business and residential homeowners often complain when there are substantial increases in property taxes. The Chamber of Commerce, through its Legislative Committee, has suggested that property taxes for business be assessed with a floating 10-year average similar to how agricultural land is assessed.

The issue of STAR bonds will come up again this session, Rep. Burroughs said. Although the use of sales tax revenue bonds has been most successful with developments in Wyandotte County, there have been other projects elsewhere where legislators complain that such incentives have been abused.

Hospitals probably will lobby again for expanded Medicaid coverage, Rep. Burroughs said. However, many legislative observers doubt that the conservative legislators will let it pass.

Burroughs is also a Unified



Commissioner. Daniel Silva, the Chamber President, said he is receiving complaints from members who are forced to close at 10 p.m. when neighboring Johnson County businesses can stay open until midnight.

Joe Vaught, a commercial Realtor and a Forum member, asked about the status of the American Royal in Village West. Rep. Burroughs said he expects the development too move ahead.

*Murrel Bland is the former editor of The Wyandotte West and The Piper Press. He is the executive editor of Business West.*

## Governor Announces Fraud Protection Updates to CARES Act Investments Portal

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly today, in a continued commitment to transparency and accountability, announced updates to the online dashboard that tracks the investments funded through the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) of the federal CARES Act. The portal has been updated to include all spending through October 31, 2020, and a newly expanded fraud protection online reporting portal.

“Kansans deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent, and that they are protected against potential fraud,” Governor Laura Kelly said. “My administration continues to prioritize transparency and accountability, and these resources are another way for us to make this valuable information accessible to the public.”

If Kansans suspect fraud, waste, or abuse of CARES Act funds, they can report their allegations via an online portal, which will help direct their concerns to the appropriate place. Previously, Kansans could call or email the Office of Recovery with their claims. The new portal will streamline the process and offer Kansans the opportunity to submit claims anonymously if they fear retribution.

Kansans can report fraud, waste, or abuse by visiting: <https://covid.ks.gov/report-fraud-waste-or-abuse/>

Additionally, the online dashboard, which launched at the end of October, has been updated to include the spending reports submitted to the Office of Recovery in mid-November. These reports include all spending through October 31, 2020. Kansans can view how and where the \$1.034 billion of Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars the State received have been invested. These investments were recommended by the SPARK Taskforce and approved by State Finance Council.

“From the beginning, we’ve been committed to ensuring Kansans have visibility in how their tax dollars are being invested and confidence that they will be used as intended,” Julie Lorenz, Executive Director of the Office of Recovery, said. “I’m pleased that we can continue to make enhancements in these areas.”

The dashboard can be viewed at <https://covid.ks.gov/covid-data/>

## Vaccine Distribution Framework to Prioritize Health Care Workers, Long Term Care Facilities

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly announced when the COVID-19 vaccine is expected to become available for population groups across the state. The framework begins this winter with high-risk Kansans such as health care personnel and long term care facility staff and residents, eventually reaching the general public in the summer of 2021.

“My administration upholds our commitment to maximizing benefits, minimizing harm, and striving for equity, justice, and fairness when it comes to when the vaccine will be made available to which Kansans,” Governor Kelly said. “We are committed to protecting the greatest number of Kansans, fostering economic recovery, and getting our kids back into school buildings as quickly and safely as possible.”

An outline of the expected availability is as follows:

- The COVID-19 vaccine will be available in the winter, on a very limited basis, for health care personnel, long term care facility staff, long term care residents, and EMS/frontline public health workers;

- The vaccine will become available in late winter, on a limited basis, for first responders, some public facing workers in essential and critical infrastructure, teachers, school staff, child care workers, and individuals at high risk for adverse health consequences;

- The vaccine will become available in the spring, at an increased availability, for all other adults;

- And finally, the vaccine will become generally available in the summer for all Kansans, including children.

## Sue's Sudsy Soapbox By: Sue Reich



**B**y the time some of you read this latest edition, it will probably be 2021. I sure hope it turns out better than the last two years have. I never really got over the happenings in 2019 when 2020 hit with a vengeance. From what I hear, 2021 isn't going to be any better. A new strain of Covid 19 will be stronger and deadlier than the one that we are fighting now. Wow, what did we do to deserve this anyway? I know our world isn't perfect, but this is really ridiculous. As I mentioned before, we have gone thru a lot in this old world but when are we going to find the time to enjoy our lives without all this disease, wars, murders and all the dreadful things that are going on? I want to enjoy my life and thought I was until all this negativity started happening. Maybe it was happening before, but I just didn't notice it. When a person thinks their life is going well, something comes up and everything comes tumbling down.

Let's get off of that and let me tell you something good. On Tuesday, two Sheriff's deputies came to my house carrying a laundry basket and it was all decorated with bows and it was full of "goodies". I was told the night before that Santa was going to visit me shortly after 9:30 a.m. OK, never did I suspect that two deputies were going to visit. Sort of scared me at first until I saw what they had. The wonderful group called the Wyandotte Angels, had been working hard filling dozens of laundry baskets with all kinds of things for older folks, the needy, kids who lost parents, the lonely, forgotten, etc. I couldn't believe that I happened to be on their list. Thank you,

you kind angels, so loving, so giving, so busy, so absolutely wonderful to do such great things for your community.

I have a long story that only some people know, but a few know what I have been through in the past couple of years. Anyway, I felt so happy that they thought of me and made my day, made my Christmas, made me feel wanted again. I wrote Melissa Bynum a thank you note and blessed all of them. I bet a lot of people don't know what a great group of citizens we have in our little towns. I love them all. Hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a safe and a Happy New Year. Please be careful out there. Watch your p's and q's and wash your hands and wear those masks. It is so important that we stay out of crowds and keep that sanitizer handy too. I sure hope 2021 is going to be better than the past two years have been. Just be careful, that's all I ask. I love all my dear friends, Sue.

### "Would It Be Christmas?"

**By: Sue Reich**

As you probably figured, I like to write songs, poems, short stories. Here is one I wrote on January 8, 1993.

Would it be Christmas without the falling snow?

Would it be Christmas without the mistletoe?

It would still be Christmas, but it would be so blue, if I had to spend Christmas without you.

Would it still be Christmas without the bells to ring?

Would it still be Christmas if carolers didn't sing?

It would still be Christmas, but it would be so blue if I had to spend it without you.

Would it still be Christmas if the stars didn't shine, would it still be Christmas without the scent of pine?

It would still be Christmas, but it would be so blue if I didn't spend it with you.

Would it still be Christmas without Santa dressed in red?

Would it still be Christmas without the reindeer and their sled?

It would still be Christmas, but it would be so blue if I couldn't spend it with you.



This was brought to my house by two Wyandotte County Sheriff's deputies. It was made by the Wyandotte Angels. I was thrilled that it came. It had so many goodies in it. Each time I looked through it I found more items. What a wonderful group of people we have in our community. Thank you so much, dear Angels.



Our commissioner, Melissa Bynum, in the kitchen at Shepherd's Center.



Two wonderful people that worked at Argentine Library.

# Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

Thank heaven 2020 is coming to a close, I am wishing for a better 2021 for everyone. There is hope with the new vaccines and the continuation of taking safety measures. When the time comes to get my shot, I'll be there. In the meantime, I stay sequestered.

Although the Turner Community Garden has more or less shut down for the year, the fellows have been working on making improvement and

upgrades. In late winter we hope to have a new 960 square foot hoop house in place. Calvin has been moving soil and with help from Turner Recreation Commission, the area is being leveled off. Construction will begin when weather permits. The plan is to get an early start on growing tomatoes and opening our Market sooner in the Spring.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers who came to help us this year -the Wyandotte Master Gardeners who have done so much in the pollinator garden expanded their efforts to include the sedum berm on 55<sup>th</sup> St. One Master Gardener, Beth Wyatt, went above and beyond not only working in the pollinator garden but oversaw the Aquaponics project, managed the Orchard, and created the Monarch But-

terfly habitat. Our other supporters this year were the Turner Recreation Commission, Turner Community Connection, the Wyandotte County Association of Retired School Personnel, and the United Government.

This may seem a little premature but at 7:00 pm on February 18, 2021, the KCK Public Library is holding another virtual author talk with Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson. The book is on the 2020 best sellers list and is entitled "Caste The Origins of our Discontents". You can register at [kckpl.librarymarket.com/events/Isabel-Wilkerson](http://kckpl.librarymarket.com/events/Isabel-Wilkerson). I was able to order a copy from the library but have yet to start reading it.

So... until next time please be kind, wash your hands, practice social distancing, and wear a mask. Happy New Year to everyone!

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## Keep Your Pets Safe This Holiday Season

The Humane Society of Missouri's Animal Medical Center of Mid-America shares important safety tips to keep pets healthy and happy this holiday season

While the holidays certainly look a bit different this year, local veterinarians at the Humane Society of Missouri's Animal Medical Center of Mid-America (AMCMA) want to ensure all celebrations are fun and safe for four-legged friends. Here are a few tips:

### Be Careful with Festive Foods

Food and drinks are a highlight of the holiday season, but they can pose dangers to your pet.

- Avoid feeding your pet anything they are not used to eating. Otherwise they could end up with an upset stomach.
- Fatty and spicy foods, chocolate, and other sweets, which can cause severe stomach issues, should be off-limits to pets.
- Don't give turkey, chicken, or ham bones to your pet. Bones can easily break and splinter, causing mouth injuries and intestinal blockage.
- Move cocktails out of your pet's reach. Even though the impact of alcohol is often mild, call your veterinarian if your pet gets a hold of an alcoholic beverage. Be on the lookout for warning signs such as lethargy, drooling, vomiting, or collapse.

### Keep Seasonal Plants and Decorations Out of Reach

Ingesting any plant or decoration has the potential to cause vomiting, diarrhea, or gastrointestinal irritation. But some can be toxic to pets, so it is important to keep pets away from all decorations.

- Plants such as mistletoe, rosemary, and holly berries can result in severe gastrointestinal upset if eaten.
- Christmas trees and other festive decorations can be dangerous to pets. If your pet chews on the lights or cords, they could be electrocuted. If ingested, decorations and tinsel could cause gastrointestinal problems or obstruction. Glass ornaments could pose an additional danger if your pet knocks them off the tree and the ornaments shatter.
- Live Christmas trees come with even more concerns. The oils from trees and tree needles can cause gastrointestinal trouble, and if pets eat the needles, those needles could puncture their intestinal lining. But the most dangerous part of the live tree is the water in the tree's base. The pine sap, preservatives, and fire retardant in the water are harmful to dogs and cats.

### Travel Safely and Secure Your Pet

If your holiday plans include driving, whether across the country or just across town to visit the dog park, your pet should be properly secured in the vehicle at all times. If there were to be an accident and your pet isn't secure, they could suffer severe or life-threatening injuries.

- Small pets should be placed in a pet carrier during car rides, and the carrier needs to be securely fastened.
- Dogs should use a pet travel safety harness that attaches to your car's seat belt.
- Make sure your pet is always wearing their collar and identification tags, and if your pet is microchipped, verify that your contact information is current with the microchip company before you leave.

## Social Security Benefits Increase In 2021

By Cecilia Fields  
Social Security District Manager In Kansas City, Ks

Nearly 70 million Americans will see a 1.3 percent increase in their Social Security benefits and SSI payments in 2021. Federal benefit rates increase when the cost-of-living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI-W).

The CPI-W rises when inflation increases, leading to a higher cost-of-living. This change means prices for goods and services, on average, are a little more expensive, so the COLA helps to offset these costs.

January 2021 marks other changes that will happen based on the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax in 2021 will be higher. The retirement earnings test exempt amount will also change in 2021. You can read our press release for more information at [www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2021.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2021.pdf).

We will mail COLA notices throughout the month of December to retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries, SSI recipients, and representative payees. Want to know your new benefit amount sooner? You can securely view and save the Social Security COLA notice online via the Message Center inside my Social Security in early December without waiting for the mailed notice.

If you don't have an account yet, you will have to create your account by November 18, 2020 to receive the COLA notice online this year. my Social Security account holders can opt out of receiving a mailed COLA notice and other paper notices that are available online. You can choose text or email alerts when there is a notice in Message Center by updating your Preferences at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount/opt-out.html](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/opt-out.html) so you always know when we have something important for you.

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You can find more information about the 2021 COLA at [www.ssa.gov/cola](http://www.ssa.gov/cola).

## Guest Editorial

### President Trump: "I Don't Think That The Russians Were Involved"

By: Tom Valverde

The first report of Russian computer hackers having breached multiple United States government agencies, which had gone on since March, came on December 13th, and it was reported by Reuters. Many Senators and House members were outraged when they first heard about the Cyber-attack. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo said in an interview on December 18th, "We can say pretty clearly that it was the Russians that engaged in this activity." For most of the week, there had been no response from the White House. On December 19th, President Trump made his first comments, and Trump "Downplayed the seriousness and impact of his Cyber espionage campaign and questioned whether Russia was to blame" Reuters.

In contrast, President elect Joe Biden has vowed to make cyber security a "Top Priority" of his administration. In response to what President Trump had said, Adam Schiff, Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee said, "Another obsequious display towards Putin. Yet, another reason Trump can't leave office fast enough." Representative Schiff also said, "Trump's comments are a scandalous betrayal of our national security!" Senator Mitt Romney was very upset at the lack of any response from the White House, he said, "Our national security is extraordinarily vulnerable. And in this, this setting, not to have the White House aggressively speaking out and protesting, and taking punitive action, is really, quite extraordinary."

Federal investigators are working to assess the damage to cyber systems and then fully understand what secrets may have been stolen. The breach occurred via an update server of a network management system that is made by the company Solar Winds. Solar Winds has filed a report with the Securities and Exchange Commission

saying that, "Fewer than 18,000 of it's more than 300,000 customers may have installed the update software." Solar Winds products are used by governments and organizations all across the World. In the U.S., these include all five branches of the military, the Pentagon, State Department, NASA, the Justice Department, Executive office of the President. Reuters first reported the hacks of the U.S. Treasury and Commerce department on the previous Sunday and was able to identify the origins of the hack, as having been carried out by a Foreign backed group.

The Cyber breach of US government agencies was so serious, that it prompted an Emergency Meeting of the National Security Council (NSC). "The United States government is aware of these reports, and we are taking all necessary steps to identify and remedy any possible issues related to this situation," said NSC spokesman, John Ulyot. As part of this espionage operation, it hacked the unclassified email systems of the Pentagon Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department and the White House. Countries spy on one another, but there needs to be deterrents and also serious consequences," said Chris Painter, State department Cyber coordinator for the Obama administration.

"One option might be sanctions on the offending country. The problem is there has Not been any coordination from the top. President Trump hasn't wanted to say anything bad to Russia, which only encourages them to act irresponsibly---across a wide range of activities. At the Very least, Painter said, "You would want to make it clear to President Vladimir Putin that this is unacceptable, the scope of it, is unacceptable." The timing could really not be worse, because of what we reported in the morning of December 18th: "Last

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## Guest Editorial ... ...from page 4

night, the acting Secretary of Defense sent out a missive, across the Pentagon; an order to stop meetings with the Biden transition team, they have cancelled all meetings today “The Pentagon tried to ‘spin this’ in, frankly, quite a laughable way today, trying to say that it was business as usual, This was a mutually agreed upon decision for the Christmas Holiday with the Biden team---completely false.” “The Biden team did not want to pause security briefings and transition during a cyber-attack, at a time when the Nation’s security is so vulnerable. Biden’s transition team want to continue apace. In fact, the transition team had made a RFI or request for information to the Pentagon. This was Not a mutual decision.” Comments by Johnathan Swan, national political reporter for AXIOS from his appearance on Washington Week. Mr. Swan continues, “And in fact, it was a decision that was discussed last night with the West Wing. My White House sources informed me that this was far from a routine decision. The cancellation of meetings was motivated by a story that

appeared in *The Washington Post* on Wednesday night about how much money Biden would be saving on the border wall, the article spoke of how Trump was “Squandering billions of Pentagon dollars, that could be used for troop readiness. “They went into a complete Fury about it!” And the Trump team without any evidence, blamed that news story on the Biden transition.”

The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) warned that the hack, “Poses a grave risk” to Federal and State governments as well as to private companies and organizations. CISA also said that “removing the malware will be highly complex and challenging for the organizations affected.” This attack on United States Intelligence is now believed to be the largest in U.S. history. Microsoft, which is helping to investigate the Cyber Hack says it identified 40 government agencies, companies, and think tanks that have been infiltrated. The hackers had access to emails and free rein for much of 2020. Trump’s own National Security agency issued a warning: “Russian state - sponsored actors” were exploiting flaws in a system broadly used in the federal government. This

espionage operation also included cyber hacks on other countries, Spain, Canada, Belgium, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates. The Russian government has denied any role in the hacks.

Jonathan Swan: “Staff at the White House were caught off-guard! And it’s one of the biggest Intelligence failures in modern history; it’s a huge wide-scaled attack.” This news, in the final days of an administration that has always been weak on governance, gives pause to think

about future possible consequences from being asleep at the wheel. Much brain power is needed to effectively run the Federal government, but Trump in his final two months has very little to show for his time in office. Since November 3rd, Trump has been fixated on trying to overturn the election that he lost. And as late as December 20th, Trump is filing an appeal to the Supreme Court, to reverse Pennsylvania’s mail-in ballot laws. And he continues to come up with unsubstantiated conspiracy theories about the

cyber breach. Trump defies his own intelligence sources, both inside and outside of government, and blames China, not Russia for the massive cyber breach across 40 Government agencies! Trump has had zero involvement to speed the Coronavirus Aid package, now over 6 months in its negotiations in Congress. It’s as if he didn’t care, and actions, or the lack of them, speak volumes of this inept president. So, it’s easy to see how Adam Schiff could say, “Trump can’t leave office fast enough!”

## Get Ready For Taxes: Steps To Take Now To Make Tax Filing Easier In 2021

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service today encouraged taxpayers to take necessary actions this fall to help file federal tax returns timely and accurately in 2021.

This is the second in a series of reminders to help taxpayers get ready for the upcoming tax filing season. A special page updated and available on IRS.gov, outlines steps taxpayers can take now to make tax filing easier in 2021.

2020 has been a busy year, with a lot of changes. To make sure taxpayers don’t miss out on tax benefits or make mistakes, they can take a few simple steps now to make filing their taxes easier in 2021.

An important first step to getting taxes ready is to gather all tax records. Having records organized makes preparing a tax return easier. It may also help discover potentially overlooked deductions or credits.

- Most income is taxable, so taxpayers should gather income documents such as Forms W-2 from employers, Forms 1099 from banks and other payers, and records of virtual currencies or other income. This also includes, unemployment income, refund interest and income from the gig economy.

- Beginning in 2020, individuals may receive Form 1099-NEC, Nonemployee Compensation, rather than Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income, if they performed certain services for and received payments from a business. Please refer to the Instructions for Form 1099-MISC and Form 1099-NEC to ensure clients are filing the appropriate form and are aware of this change.

- Taxpayers may also need Notice 1444, Economic Impact Payment, which shows how much of a payment they received in 2020. This amount is needed to calculate any Recovery Rebate Credit they may be eligible for when they file their federal income tax return in 2021. People who didn’t receive an Economic Impact Payment in 2020 may qualify for the Recovery Rebate Credit when they file their 2020 taxes in 2021.

- To see information from the most recently filed tax return, recent payments and more taxpayers can sign up to view account information online.

- Taxpayers should notify the IRS of address changes and notify the Social Security Administration of a legal name change to avoid delays in tax return processing.

Taxpayers with an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) should ensure it hasn’t expired before filing a tax return in 2021. For example, ITINs not used on a federal tax return at least once in the last three years will expire on Dec. 31, 2020. If the ITIN has expired, IRS recommends taxpayers submit Form W-7, Application for IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, now to renew an ITIN. Taxpayers who fail to renew ITINs before filing a tax return next year could face a delayed refund and may be ineligible for certain tax credits.

Time is running out to use the Tax Withholding Estimator, a tool on IRS.gov designed to help determine the right amount of tax to have withheld from paychecks. Taxpayers can use the Tax Withholding Estimator to help determine if adjustments to withholding are necessary. Withholding changes can be made by submitting a new Form W-4 to the taxpayer’s employer.

Taxpayers receiving substantial amounts of non-wage income like self-employment income, investment income, taxable Social Security benefits and in some instances, pension and annuity income, should make quarterly estimated tax payments. The last payment for 2020 is due on Jan. 15, 2021. Payment options can be found at IRS.gov/payments.

LEGAL PUBLICATION

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### Request for Proposal Advertisement

Turner Unified School District No. 202 is seeking Bid Proposals for the purchase of a Forklift and Racking System at Turner Middle School.

Documents pertaining to this Request for Proposal will be provided to any qualified contractor free of charge by email request sent to [crockettc@turnerusd202.org](mailto:crockettc@turnerusd202.org)

Turner USD 202 Facility Supervisor, Chris Crockett will host the blind bid opening on Wednesday January 6, 2021 at 12:30 pm. The location of the bid opening will be the Facility and Grounds Building located at 5800 Metropolitan, Kansas City, KS 66106. Turner USD 202 will announce the vendor that is awarded the bid January 20, 2021.

(First published 12-17-20)  
3t-The Record-12-31-20

### Request for Proposal Advertisement

Turner Unified School District No. 202 is seeking Bid Proposals for Turner High School Exterior Building Repairs .

Documents pertaining to this Request for Proposal will be provided to any qualified contractor free of charge by email request sent to [crockettc@turnerusd202.org](mailto:crockettc@turnerusd202.org)

Turner USD 202 Facility Supervisor, Chris Crockett will host the blind bid opening on Wednesday January 13, 2021 at 1:00 pm. The location of the bid opening will be the Facility and Grounds Building located at 5800 Metropolitan, Kansas City, KS 66106. Turner USD 202 will announce the vendor that is awarded the bid January 20, 2021.

(First published 12-17-20)  
3t-The Record-12-31-20



## Passings...

By Sue Reich

Erma Lee Meditz, age 92, passed away December 17, 2020. Born in Argentine, she was a graduate of Argentine high school, class of 1946. Lived in Turner 66 years. Worked at for the Turner School District as a cafeteria manager for many years. Her relaxing and fun job was working at Shalinsky Drugs, Maple Hill.

Genaro Rangel, age 88, passed away December 15, 2020. Born in Turner.



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