

Governor signs bipartisan bills to help Kansans during COVID-19 Pandemic

Mar 19, 2020

Governor Laura Kelly signed three bipartisan bills into law today in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I want to thank the Legislature for working together to fast track this critical legislation,” Kelly said. “As COVID-19 continues to spread, our response is constantly evolving. We must have a plan for Kansans who are facing so much uncertainty. The bills will help our state navigate these difficult circumstances. We will get through this together.”

Senate Bill 27:

House Substitute for Senate Bill 27 extends unemployment eligibility for workers who started to file unemployment insurance claims on or after January 1, 2020. These workers would be eligible for a maximum of 26 weeks of benefits, instead of the current effective maximum of 16 weeks.

“The fallout of the aviation industry has been felt all across Kansas, long before the COVID-19 epidemic,” Kelly said. “Now, more than ever, hardworking Kansans need the support necessary to provide for their families.”

Senate Bill 142:

House Substitute for Senate Bill 142 expands education waiver authority during disaster emergencies. Under current law, students are required by statute to attend at least 1,116 school hours per school year. This bill allows local school boards to receive waivers for this requirement under a state of disaster declaration, with the understanding that they will utilize continuous learning for their students during this time. Additionally, the bill codifies legislative intent that school districts continue to pay all hourly employees during a disaster shutdown.

“In a time of crisis and uncertainty, our schools need flexibility and support to maximize learning opportunities for students while making sure children, their families and school district employees are safe,” Kelly said.

Senate Bill 102:

House Substitute for Senate Bill 102 expands authority of the judicial branch in time of disaster, permitting the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to issue

an order extending statutory deadlines or time limitations on court proceedings and authorizes video conferencing.

“This will allow our court system to continue to function during the crisis while ensuring our court employees and the public are safe and healthy,” Kelly said.

These bills become effective upon publication in the *Kansas Register*. A special edition has been expedited for publication and printing today by the Legislature and the Secretary of State.