

# **Bright and Carpenter Consulting, Inc.**



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## **2022 Kansas Primary Election Legislative Report**

The 2022 Primary Election was highlighted by the Value Them Both abortion amendment, a few highly contested statewide races, and several surprising House district upsets. We continue to analyze and digest the results from Tuesday's primary election in anticipation of the 2022 general elections. *Please note these reported results are preliminary and are not official until certified by the Secretary of State's office.*

The Kansas House of Representatives continues to experience a shift in GOP power. Several Republican incumbents lost their seats this week to their more conservative challengers, along with seven moderate-leaning legislators who retired this year. Party leaders are cautiously hopeful they can keep their veto-proof majority after the November general election.

A total of eight incumbent lawmakers – seven Republicans and one Democrat – will not be returning to Topeka next legislative session:

- House Federal and State Affairs Chairman **John Barker** (R-Abilene) lost to former state school board member Scott Hill.
- Representative **Brad Ralph** (R-Dodge City) lost to former church pastor Jason Goetz.
- Representative **John Wheeler** (R-Garden City) lost to attorney and former federal prosecutor Bob Lewis.
- Representative **Mark Samsel** (R-Wellsville) lost to Carrie Barth, who has advocated against COVID-19 vaccine requirements.
- Representative **Suzi Carlson** (R-Clay Center) lost to farmer Bill Bloom.
- Representative **Cheryl Helmer** (R-Mulvane) lost to auctioneer and real estate agent Webster Roth.
- Representative **Aaron Coleman** (D-Kansas City) lost to nurse practitioner Melissa Oropeza.
- Representative **Tatum Lee-Hahn** (R-Ness City) lost to Representative Jim Minnix (R-Scott City) when reapportionment combined their districts. Lee-Hahn was the more conservative of the two candidates and had a history of clashing with Republican House leadership.

Out of the 125 House districts, 60 will have a general election in November – 46 Republican and 19 Democrat – and 65 are uncontested seats.

Two statewide races drew particular attention this week.

Former Kansas Secretary of State **Kris Kobach** won the Republican nomination for **Attorney General** against Chairwoman of the Senate Judiciary Committee Kellie Warren and former federal prosecutor Tony Mattivi. Kobach will challenge Democrat Chris Mann, a lawyer from Lawrence in the general election. Kobach is best known for his anti-immigration policies and has publicly stated that this will be a central issue during his term as Attorney General if he wins this November. It was a hard-fought race, particularly between Kobach and Warren. Warren received endorsements from many influential organizations like the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Americans for Prosperity as well as from former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Congressman Roger Marshall.

Representative **Steven Johnson** (R-Assaria) is still in the race for **State Treasurer** against Chairwoman of the Senate Tax Committee **Caryn Tyson** (R-Parker), with both deadlocked at 50% of the votes. As of Friday morning, Johnson led with just 150. Over 27,000 mail ballots have not been returned and thousands of provisional ballots are still being counted. The race hinges on the Johnson County provisional ballots, the county that Tyson won by more than 10%.

An important twist in the race for Governor, conservative **Senator Dennis Pyle** of Hiawatha – after changing his affiliation from Republican to Unaffiliated – received nearly 9,000 petition signatures (only 5,000 required) to add his name to the November ballot to run against Republican Attorney General Derek Schmidt and Democrat Governor Laura Kelly. On Thursday, Republican Party leaders were asking citizens to withdraw their names from Pyle's petition, warning that a third-party candidate on the ballot will split the Republican vote and hand the win to Governor Kelly.

Finally, Kansans overwhelmingly voted against the **Value Them Both** constitutional amendment 59% to 41%. The question on Tuesday's primary election ballot would have allowed the state legislature to regulate abortion laws in Kansas. After the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe vs. Wade* in June, national media turned their attention to Kansas as the first state to vote on abortion laws since the landmark decision. Democrats are expected to use this win as they campaign for the general in November.

*For the latest and most complete election results, please visit the Kansas Secretary of State's website: [https://ent.sos.ks.gov/kssos\\_ent.html](https://ent.sos.ks.gov/kssos_ent.html)*