House Committee Hears Hospital Grant Bill
The House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Representative Troy Waymaster (R-Bunker Hill), met this morning for a hearing on House Bill 2522. The bill would create the Rural Hospital Innovation Grant Program within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. An eligible county could apply to KDHE for rural hospital transitional assistance grants. Eligible counties include all counties in Kansas other than Douglas, Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee or Wyandotte County. The assistance provided in the program would relate to changing a hospital’s current health care delivery model to a model more appropriate for the community served by the hospital. For every $1 of state funds awarded, eligible counties must provide a $2 match from private stakeholder monies, which could include hospital foundations or other organizations. The bill would create the Rural Hospital Innovation Grant Fund within KDHE, which would receive $10 million on July 1, 2020. Private stakeholders could donate funds to the program, which would be deposited into the fund. The program would expire on June 30, 2024, at which point all monies in the fund would be transferred to the State General Fund. Assuming sufficient private stakeholder funds are raised under the $2 private funds to $1 state funds matching requirement, a maximum of $30.0 million would be available in the Rural Hospital Innovation Grant Fund for the grant program ($10.0 million from State General Fund transfer plus $20.0 million private funds). The Kansas Hospital Association provided testimony in support of the bill. The committee closed the hearing without taking action on the bill.

Introduction of Bills
House Bill 2721 – Concerning economic development; relating to rural opportunity zones; extending the time period for eligibility in the loan repayment program and the income tax credit. By the Committee on Taxation.