AN ACT concerning counties; relating to the establishment of a county consolidation commission.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. (a) The governor shall appoint a 12-member county unification study commission. The appointments shall be made by July 30, 2011. No more than seven members of the commission shall be from the same political party. At least two members shall be from each congressional district. Members of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, persons with experience in business mergers and consolidations, business management, business finance, municipal finance, law, education, political science or public administration.

(b) Members of the commission shall be paid compensation, subsistence allowances, mileage and other expenses as provided by K.S.A. 75-3223, and amendments thereto.

(c) The governor shall appoint an executive director of the commission. The executive director shall receive compensation established by the governor, within the limits of appropriations for that purpose. The executive director shall employ other staff and may contract with consultants, as the executive director deems necessary to carry out the functions of the commission. Staff employed by the executive director shall receive compensation established by the executive director and approved by the governor, within the limits of appropriations for that purpose.

(d) Within 30 days following the appointment of all members of the commission, the commission shall meet and organize by the election of a chairperson and vice-chairperson and other officers deemed necessary. The commission may adopt rules governing the conduct of its meetings.

(e) The commission shall hold public hearings for the purpose of receiving information and materials which will aid in the drafting of the plan and shall review Kansas county consolidation studies conducted by various university professors.

Sec. 2. The commission shall prepare and adopt a plan addressing the consolidation of counties. The commission shall conduct such studies and investigations as it deems appropriate to complete its work. Such studies and investigations shall include, but not be limited to,
The feasibility of implementing a county consolidation plan which would consolidate the 105 counties in Kansas into fewer counties or consolidated counties, including, but not limited to, a county consolidation plan that would consolidate counties into 23 county units as follows:

1. Butler county;
2. Allen, Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Montgomery, Wilson and Woodson counties;
3. Clark, Comanche, Edwards, Ford, Grey, Hodgeman, Kiowa and Ness counties;
4. Douglas county;
5. Anderson, Franklin, Linn and Miami counties;
6. Chase, Coffey, Greenwood, Lyon, Morris, Osage and Wabaunsee counties;
7. Finney, Greeley, Hamilton, Kearney, Lane, Scott and Wichita counties;
8. Barton, Ellsworth, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties;
9. Ellis, Graham, Norton, Osborne, Phillips, Rooks, Russell, Smith and Trego counties;
10. Barber, Harper, Kingman, Pratt and Reno counties;
11. Johnson county;
12. Leavenworth county;
13. Grant, Haskell, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton and Stevens counties;
14. Geary, Pottawatomie and Riley counties;
15. Harvey, McPherson and Marion counties;
17. Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson and Nemaha counties;
18. Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas and Wallace counties;
19. Dickinson, Lincoln, Ottawa and Saline counties;
20. Sedgwick county;
21. Shawnee county;
22. Chautauqua, Cowley, Elk and Sumner counties; and
23. Wyandotte county.

(b) the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative operations of the consolidated county plan; and

(c) the costs, savings and benefits of the consolidated county plan.

Sec. 3. (a) For the purposes of performing its studies and investigations, the commission or its executive director may administer
oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses, compel their attendance, take evidence, require the production of any books, papers, correspondence, memoranda, agreements or other documents or records which the commission or executive director deems relevant or material to its studies and investigation.

(b) On or before January 1, 2013, the commission shall submit its final plan to the governor and legislature. The final plan shall include the full text and an explanation of the proposed plan, and comments deemed desirable by the commission.

Sec. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.