

SESSION OF 2020

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2561

As Amended by House Committee on Elections

Brief*

HB 2561, as amended, would amend the State Governmental Ethics Law to permit legislative assistants and committee assistants to accept gifts, not to exceed \$120 in total value per fiscal year, from an individual legislator the assistant works for or legislative committee chair or vice-chair.

Background

The bill was introduced in the House Committee on Elections by Representative Blake Carpenter.

In the House Committee hearing, the Executive Director of the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission (Commission) testified as neutral. He testified the Commission only supports legislation that specifically comes from the Commission's legislative recommendations, but the Commission does not oppose this bill. He testified the bill would not raise concerns of corruption or improper favor and the Commission has not taken action against legislative or committee assistants who have accepted such gifts in the past. A representative of the Department of Administration (Department) provided written-only neutral testimony, and another representative of the Department appeared at the hearing to provide information. She testified any such gift received by legislative or committee assistants would be considered taxable income.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The House Committee amended the bill to:

- Permit legislative assistants and committee assistants to receive more than one gift;
- Change the time frame such assistants may receive such gifts from per legislative session to per fiscal year;
- Include legislative committee chairs or vice-chairs as individuals assistants may receive gifts from; and
- Increase the total value of the gifts that may be received from \$100 per legislative session to \$120 per fiscal year.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the Commission indicates enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on agency operations. The Legislative Coordinating Council indicates enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on agency operations.