

As Amended by Senate Committee

Session of 2026

SENATE BILL No. 353

By Committee on Federal and State Affairs

1-21

1 AN ACT designating the official Kansas railroad hall of fame for the
2 purpose of celebrating the rich railroad heritage of Kansas and the
3 Kansans who were and are leaders in such industry; setting the location
4 of such hall of fame at the great plains transportation museum in
5 Wichita; establishing the Kansas railroad hall of fame selection
6 committee; prescribing powers and duties of the committee.

7
8 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

9 Section 1. (a) The legislature finds that the state of Kansas, during the
10 latter half of the 19th century, was a nexus for development of rail
11 transportation in the new frontier of the west. The growth of
12 transcontinental routes, as well as secondary lines that served the cattle
13 and farming industries and delivered goods to the burgeoning new
14 communities across the state, left in their wake a rich heritage of rail travel
15 and shipment that constituted a pivotal part of Kansas history. Even today,
16 goods move through Kansas by rail at a high rate, and the railroad
17 transportation system continues to be an important part of the state
18 economy. Therefore, the legislature finds that there shall be established an
19 officially sanctioned Kansas railroad hall of fame to recognize the
20 important individuals who developed rail transportation in Kansas and
21 continue such endeavors today. The legislature further finds that the
22 location that would best serve this purpose is the great plains
23 transportation museum, located in Wichita, because the museum is
24 established with a focus on transportation and could provide benefits,
25 synergies and facilities helpful to establishing and ensuring the success of
26 the Kansas railroad hall of fame.

27 (b) The great plains transportation museum, located in Wichita, is
28 hereby designated as the official site of and repository for the Kansas
29 railroad hall of fame.

30 (c) The management of the Kansas railroad hall of fame located at the
31 great plains transportation museum is vested in the Kansas railroad hall of
32 fame selection committee established pursuant to section 2, and
33 amendments thereto.

34 (d) The provisions of sections 1 through 4, and amendments thereto,
35 shall be known and may be cited as the Kansas railroad hall of fame act.

36 Sec. 2. (a) There is hereby established the Kansas railroad hall of

1 fame selection committee composed of:

2 (1) The executive director of the great plains transportation museum,
3 who shall serve ex officio with all powers of an appointed member;

4 (2) the executive director of the state historical society, who shall
5 serve ex officio with all powers of an appointed member;

6 (3) two members who shall be initially appointed by the governor
7 from a list of at least five individuals nominated by the board of directors
8 of the great plains transportation museum. Such list shall be comprised of
9 current or former members of such board of directors. The term of a great
10 plains transportation museum board member appointed to the selection
11 committee shall be for the period of such individual's membership on such
12 museum board of directors. The term of a former board member shall be
13 four years. All subsequent appointments and any vacancy in office of a
14 member of the selection committee appointed pursuant to this paragraph
15 shall be filled by the governor by appointment from a list of at least three
16 individuals nominated by the board of directors of the great plains
17 transportation museum who meet the requirements as described by this
18 paragraph;

19 (4) one representative of the railroad industry to be appointed by the
20 governor for a term of two years; and

21 (5) two representatives of the public who are or have been employed
22 in the railroad industry as described by section 3(a)(1)(A) or (B), and
23 amendments thereto, to be appointed by the governor for a term of two
24 years.

25 (b) Upon the vacancy of office or expiration of the term of office of
26 any member who has been appointed, a successor shall be appointed in the
27 same manner as the original appointment, except as otherwise provided by
28 paragraph (a)(3). Vacancies in office of appointed members with an
29 unexpired term of years shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired
30 term of the member creating the vacancy. The governor may remove a
31 member at any time, and the resulting vacancy shall be promptly filled as
32 provided by this section. Appointed members may be reappointed but shall
33 not serve more than two consecutive terms, including any partial term.

34 (c) The Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee shall
35 organize annually by electing one of the committee members as
36 chairperson, one as vice chairperson and one as treasurer. Meetings of the
37 selection committee shall be held upon the call of the chairperson or may
38 be called by a majority of the selection committee. Meetings shall be open
39 to the public and shall be held at the facilities of the great plains
40 transportation museum, if possible, or in proximity to the Kansas railroad
41 hall of fame.

42 (d) Members of the Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee
43 shall serve without compensation, except that members may receive

1 reimbursement for expenses incurred in attending meetings or performing
2 duties for the selection committee from available moneys.

3 (e) Decisions of the Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee
4 shall be by the majority vote of all members. Members may participate and
5 vote remotely if such participation and vote is ascertainable by members of
6 the public physically present at the meeting.

7 Sec. 3. (a) The Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee
8 established pursuant to section 2, and amendments thereto,—shall **may**
9 annually select ~~two~~ individuals for induction into the Kansas railroad hall
10 of fame. The purpose of such selections shall be to honor those individuals
11 whose achievements in or for the Kansas railroad industry have brought
12 distinction to themselves and to the state of Kansas. A candidate for
13 induction into the Kansas railroad hall of fame shall have:

14 (1) (A) Worked within this state with an officially sanctioned railroad
15 operating within this state;

16 (B) worked within this state in the manufacture within this state of
17 railroad-related products, rail cars or locomotives; or

18 (C) been otherwise significantly involved in the railroad industry in
19 this state; and

20 (2) contributed significantly to rail service in Kansas or to the
21 preservation of the rail heritage of Kansas.

22 (b) Any member of the Kansas railroad hall of fame selection
23 committee or interested individual may nominate a candidate for
24 consideration by the selection committee for induction into the Kansas
25 railroad hall of fame. The selection committee shall prepare and make
26 available to the public a nomination form available in printed format or on
27 the website or webpage of the Kansas railroad hall of fame. The
28 nomination form shall include:

29 (1) Contact information pertaining to the nominee, including the
30 name, address, phone number and email address or, if the nominee is
31 deceased, the name and contact information of a relative or close personal
32 acquaintance of the nominee;

33 (2) information pertaining to the nominator, including the name,
34 address, phone number, email address and the nominator's relationship to
35 the nominee;

36 (3) a statement of approximately 1,000 words or more explaining
37 why the nominee should be a candidate for induction into the Kansas
38 railroad hall of fame, including how the nominee contributed to the Kansas
39 rail industry and meets the criteria of subsection (a)(1) and (a)(2) and why
40 such contribution is significant; and

41 (4) such other information as may be required by the selection
42 committee.

43 (c) The Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee may

1 research or request additional information as the selection committee may
2 find helpful in determining whether to induct a candidate into the Kansas
3 railroad hall of fame. Information provided to or obtained and considered
4 by the selection committee for the purpose of reviewing candidates and
5 making a decision as to which candidates are to be inducted into the
6 Kansas railroad hall of fame may be made available to the public for the
7 purpose of informing the public regarding the basis of the committee's
8 decision and the accomplishments and contribution of candidates to the
9 railroad heritage of Kansas. The selection committee shall not be required
10 to disclose information or records, including, but not limited to, personally
11 identifiable information or other personal information provided on the
12 nomination form, that are not required to be disclosed by a public agency
13 pursuant to K.S.A. 45-221, and amendments thereto, or are protected
14 under any other applicable state or federal law.

15 (d) The Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee:

16 (1) Shall provide for an appropriate location at the facilities of the
17 great plains transportation museum, if possible, or in close proximity to
18 such facilities for the display of any plaques, trophies, mementos, awards,
19 photographs, biographical or historical material or other information that
20 may come into the committee's possession for the purpose of recognizing
21 the achievements of the individual Kansans inducted into the Kansas
22 railroad hall of fame. The selection committee shall also provide for the
23 appropriate display of such items or information at such location;

24 (2) may provide an outside display on a printed metal sign or signs
25 that may include photos of the inductees, abbreviated biographies of
26 inductees and information about the Kansas railroad hall of fame. The
27 display may be mounted on public property or a public right-of-way at a
28 suitable location, as determined by the selection committee in cooperation
29 with the Kansas department of transportation or local government
30 authorities. The Kansas department of transportation shall assist with the
31 siting and establishment of the display upon request by the selection
32 committee;

33 (3) shall establish a website or webpage for the Kansas railroad hall
34 of fame, which may be located on or linked with the website of the great
35 plains transportation museum;

36 (4) may solicit and accept gifts, grants, bequests, donations or
37 gratuities of money, services, real or personal property or rights from
38 individuals, businesses, organizations or any governmental source to be
39 used for the Kansas railroad hall of fame. Such moneys, property or
40 services shall be used for the purposes for which provided, including the
41 purchase of awards, outdoor or indoor displays, display or exhibit cases,
42 induction ceremonies, a website or webpage or such other purposes for the
43 Kansas railroad hall of fame that the selection committee may deem

1 appropriate. Such moneys and any fees received pursuant to section 4, and
2 amendments thereto, shall be deposited by the treasurer in a suitable
3 account of the Kansas railroad hall of fame at an appropriate financial
4 institution as determined by the selection committee. All expenditures
5 from such account shall be used for the purposes and intent of the Kansas
6 railroad hall of fame act and authorized by the majority vote of the
7 selection committee. Financial records of the selection committee shall be
8 maintained by the treasurer; and

9 (5) may enter into such agreements or contracts with public or private
10 entities or individuals to fulfill the duties and purposes of the selection
11 committee and the intent of this act, including, but not limited to,
12 agreements or contracts with the great plains transportation museum for
13 the use of facilities and other assistance and cooperation.

14 Sec. 4. (a) The Kansas railroad hall of fame selection committee shall
15 provide appropriate ceremonies to induct the individuals selected pursuant
16 to section 3, and amendments thereto, into the Kansas railroad hall of
17 fame. Such ceremonies shall be conducted at least annually on
18 approximately the same date at the facilities of the great plains
19 transportation museum, if possible, or in proximity to the Kansas railroad
20 hall of fame. Such ceremonies shall include appropriate awards and
21 certifications and may include food or entertainment.

22 (b) The selection committee may fix and charge fees for attendance at
23 ceremonies described by subsection (a) to recover all or a part of the
24 expenses of the ceremonies or other expenses of the Kansas railroad hall
25 of fame. Such fees shall be deposited and expended by the selection
26 committee pursuant to section 3, and amendments thereto.

27 Sec. 5. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
28 publication in the statute book.