

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2180

As Amended by House Committee on Energy,
Utilities and Telecommunications

Brief*

HB 2180, as amended, would establish the Blind Information Access Act which would create the Blind Information Access Fund in the State Treasury to support on-demand information access services, such as news publications, for persons who are blind, visually impaired, deafblind, or print disabled.

Contract for Services

The bill would require the State Librarian to estimate the cost of entering into a contract with an organization that delivers on-demand information access services (services) to persons who are blind, visually impaired, deafblind, or print disabled. The services would provide access to digital content through:

- Audio;
- Electronic text and braille reading technologies; and
- Other related services, including, but not limited to:
 - Kansas-specific publications;
 - National publications;
 - International publications;
 - Breaking news sources; and

*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 <https://klrd.gov/>

- Localized emergency weather alerts.

The services would be provided using telecommunication services or internet services.

The State Librarian would be required to submit a report to the Legislature and the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) on or before November 1 of each year that would specify the estimated cost to enter into such a contract and would certify such cost to the Administrator of the Kansas Universal Service Fund (KUSF).

Funding for Services

Upon receipt of the certification, the KUSF Administrator would make transfers, in 12 equal monthly payments, from the KUSF to the State Treasurer, who would credit that amount to the Blind Information Access Fund, which would be created by the bill.

The bill would require that upon receipt of the certified amount for the services, the State Librarian would enter into or renew the contract for services.

The State Librarian would also be required to promote the services to persons who may be eligible.

Conforming and Technical Amendments

The bill would make conforming amendments to allow for KUSF moneys to be used for services contracted pursuant to the bill.

The bill would also remove outdated provisions for FY 2013 appropriations regarding the KAN-ED Fund.

Effective Date

The bill would take effect on July 1, 2027, upon publication in the statute book.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications at the request of Representative McDonald on behalf of Representative Ohaebosim.

House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by representatives of the National Federation of the Blind in Kansas, a former state senator, and two private citizens. The proponents provided an overview of the different services that are made available through the State Library and discussed information access funding issues. The proponents specifically mentioned that the move from using State General Fund moneys to KUSF moneys would provide a more consistent funding source, allowing for more consistent access from year-to-year.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by two private citizens.

Neutral testimony was provided by the Deputy Chief of Telecommunications of the KCC. The conferee reported that the third-party administrator of the KUSF indicated it does not anticipate any additional costs upon enactment of the bill.

Written-only neutral testimony was provided by the State Librarian.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to change the effective date to July 1, 2027, upon publication in the statute book.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, the State Library indicates enactment of the bill would increase its annual expenditures by \$97,917 from the Blind Information Access Fund beginning in FY 2026 and \$100,000 in FY 2027. The agency's FY 2026 estimate includes \$30,500 to contract with an organization to deliver on-demand information access service; \$52,917 for salaries and wages to fill an existing 1.0 FTE position to promote information access services to eligible individuals; and \$14,500 for expenses associated with outreach, periodical subscriptions, and administrative costs. A corresponding amount would be transferred by the KUSF Administrator to the State Treasurer for credit to the Blind Information Access Fund, which would be created by the bill.

The Division of the Budget notes that in the FY 2026 Governor's recommendation for the State Library, a total of \$95,399 from the State General Fund is included for the Blind Information Access Program. If enacted, the State Library would not need the State General Fund appropriation for FY 2026 since the source of revenue would come from a transfer from the KUSF to the Blind Information Access Fund.

The KCC indicates there would be no fiscal effect on agency operations with enactment of the bill. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2026 Governor's Budget Report*.

Blind Information Access Act; Blind Information Access Fund; Kansas Universal Service Fund; State Library; State Treasury