

# Intro to State Government

Samir Arif, Stephanie Smith, Tom Day

October 16, 2025

# Meet the Speakers



Samir Arif  
Executive Branch



Stephanie Smith  
Judicial Branch



Tom Day  
Legislative Branch

# Introduction

Basic Structure of  
Government

How the three branches are  
organized

How they interact with each  
other

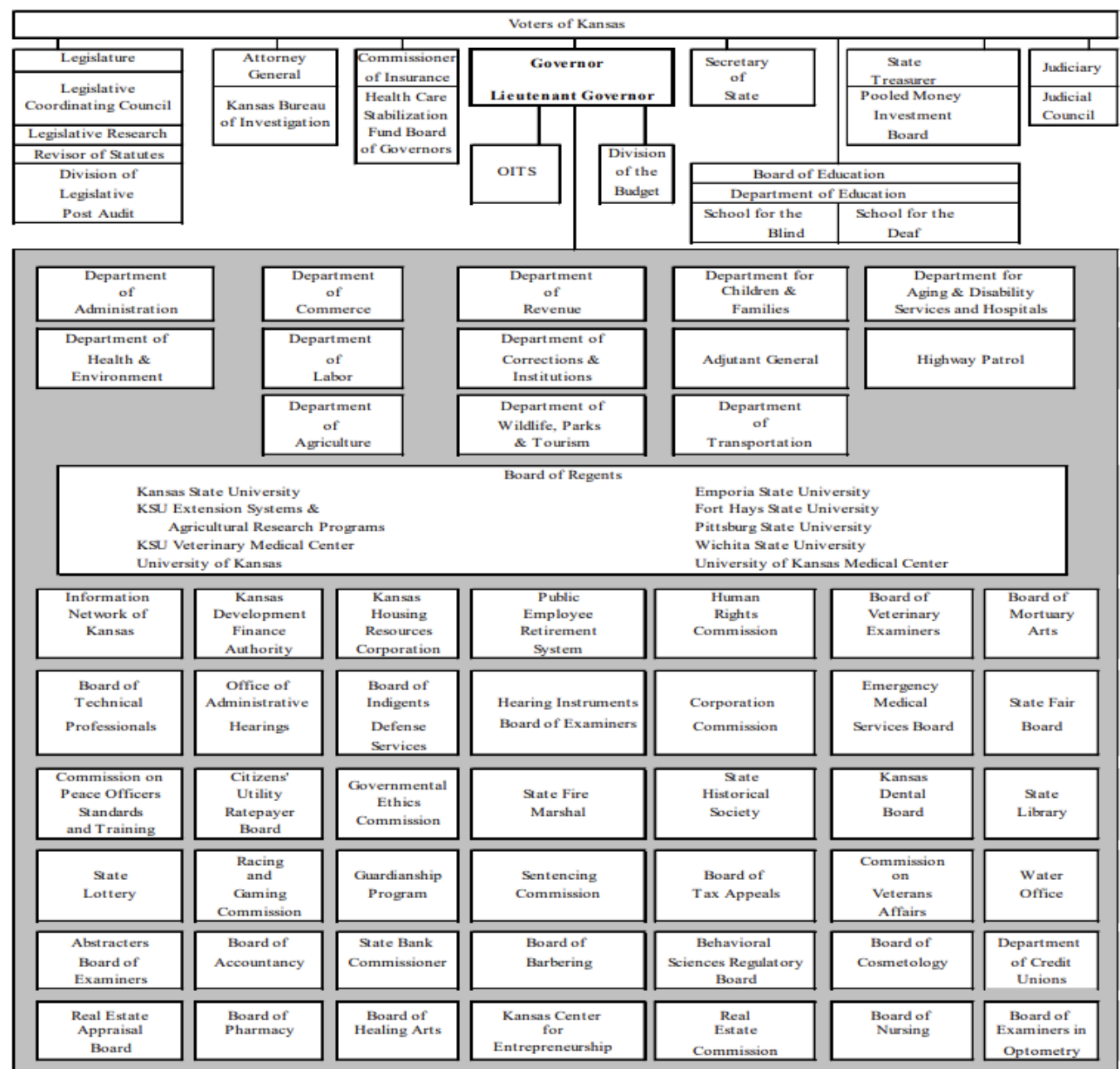


# The People of Kansas

## Kansas Constitution Bill of Rights, Section 2

“All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and are instituted for their equal protection and benefit”.

# The Executive Branch



# The Cabinet

Adjutant General: Michael Venerdi

Secretary of Administration: Adam Proffitt

Secretary for Aging and Disability Services: Laura Howard

Secretary of Agriculture: Mike Beam

Secretary for Children and Families: Laura Howard

Secretary of Commerce: David Toland

Secretary of Corrections: Jeff Zmuda

Secretary of Health and Environment: Janet Stanek

Superintendent of the Highway Patrol: Erik Smith

Secretary of Labor: Amber Shultz

Secretary of Revenue: Mark Burghart

Secretary of Transportation: Calvin Reed

Secretary of Wildlife and Parks: Chris Kennedy

# Non-Cabinet Agencies

- 56 non-cabinet agencies (depending on how you count)
  - Most non-cabinet agencies are governed by a board or commission
  - The employees of these agencies report to their boards or commissions
  - The missions of these agencies tend to be more specific, and more focused on regulatory issues

# Other Elected Offices

In addition to the Governor and Lt. Governor, there are four other offices that are directly elected by the people

- Attorney General
- Secretary of State
- Treasurer
- Insurance Commissioner

# **Kansas Judicial Branch**

**October 16, 2025**

# Meet the speaker

**Stephanie Smith**  
Judicial Administrator  
Kansas Judicial Branch





# Kansas judicial branch

The judicial branch is a co-equal branch of state government. It derives its authority from the people of Kansas as spelled out in the Kansas Constitution.

Kansas courts deliver fair, timely, and equal access to justice based on the rule of law.

# Three branches of government

Each branch contributes to a level field for Kansas business.

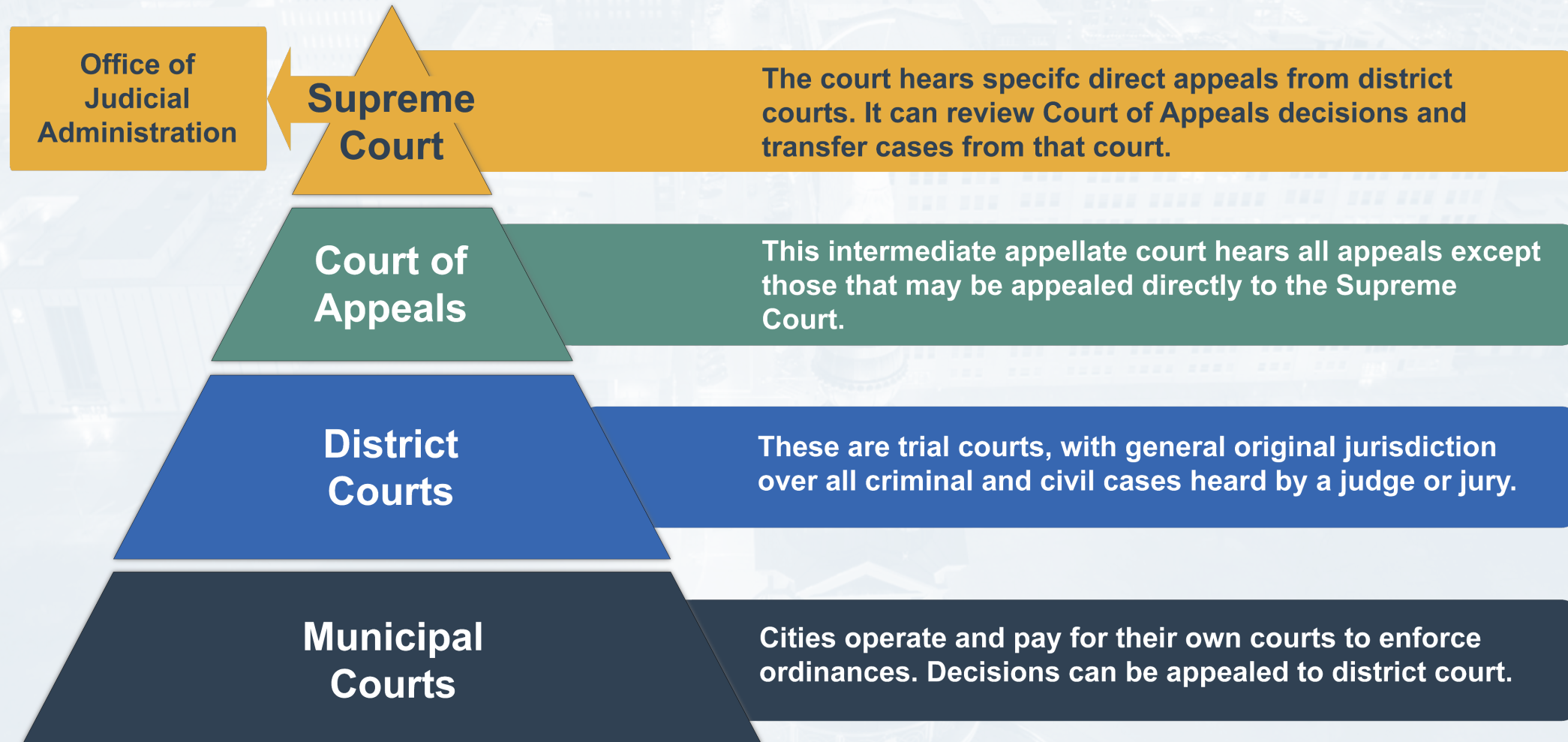


**Legislative branch makes laws.**

**Executive branch enforces laws.**

**Judicial branch interprets and applies laws.**

# Levels of Kansas courts



# Kansas Supreme Court



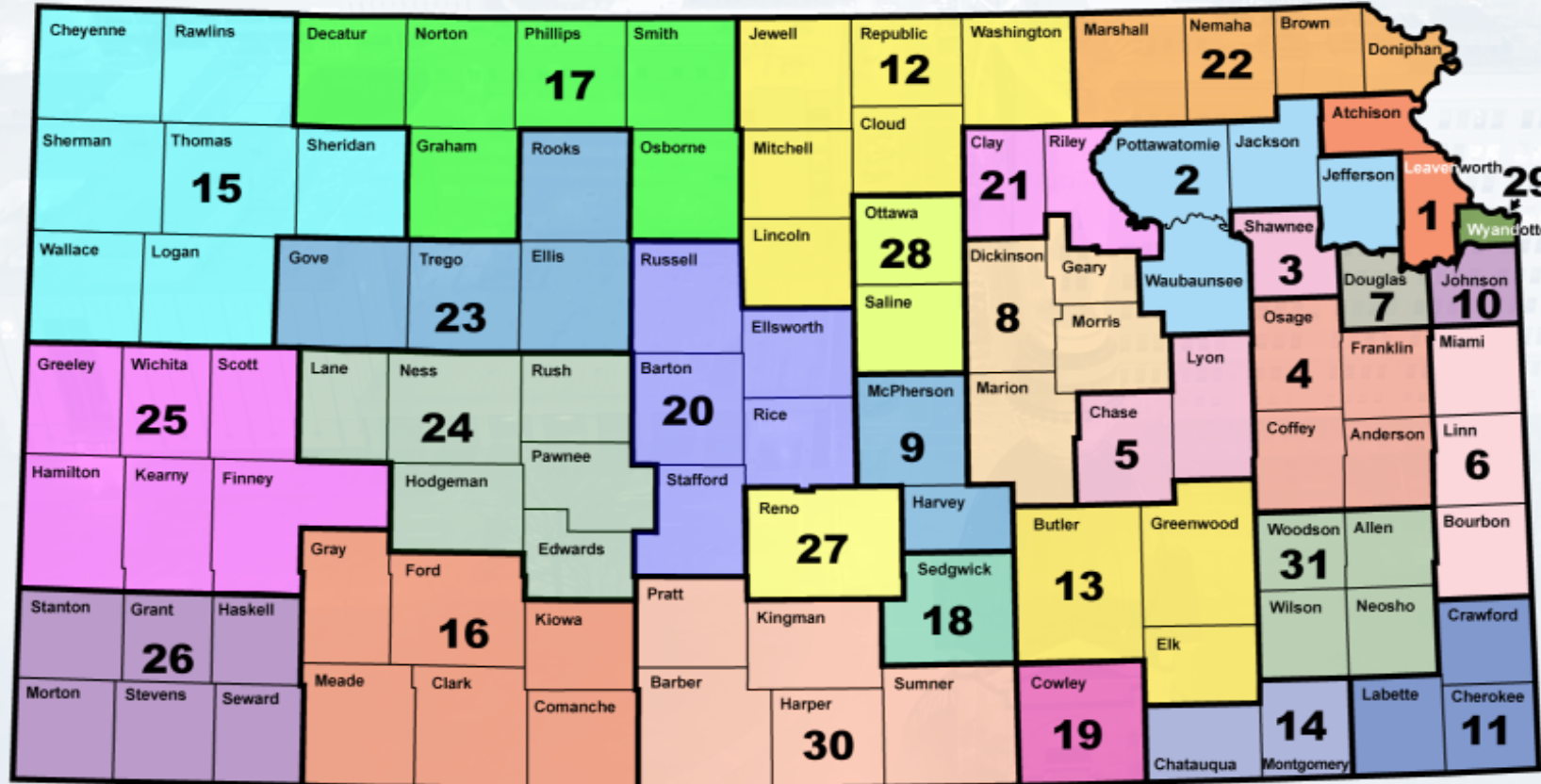
- Seven justices; chief justice is longest serving justice
- Appointed by governor from list of three qualified nominees from Supreme Court Nominating Commission
- Subject to retention vote after first year in office and each successive term
- Terms are six years

# Kansas Court of Appeals



- 14 judges
- Nominated by governor and confirmed by Kansas Senate
- Subject to retention vote after first year in office and each successive term
- Terms are four years

# Kansas judicial districts



- 105 counties grouped into 31 judicial districts
- Seven one-county districts
- Each judicial district has chief judge

# Judges of district courts

## District judges

- 183 district judges
- Must be attorneys
- Exercise full power and authority of the court
- Selected through merit selection with retention vote or by partisan ballot
- Terms are four years

## District magistrate judges

- 86 magistrate judges
- May or may not be attorneys
- K.S.A. 20-302b articulates magistrate judge jurisdiction. Includes traffic and juvenile matters, misdemeanor trials, and preliminary examinations in felony cases
- Hear certain civil actions as set forth in statute

# Judges of district courts

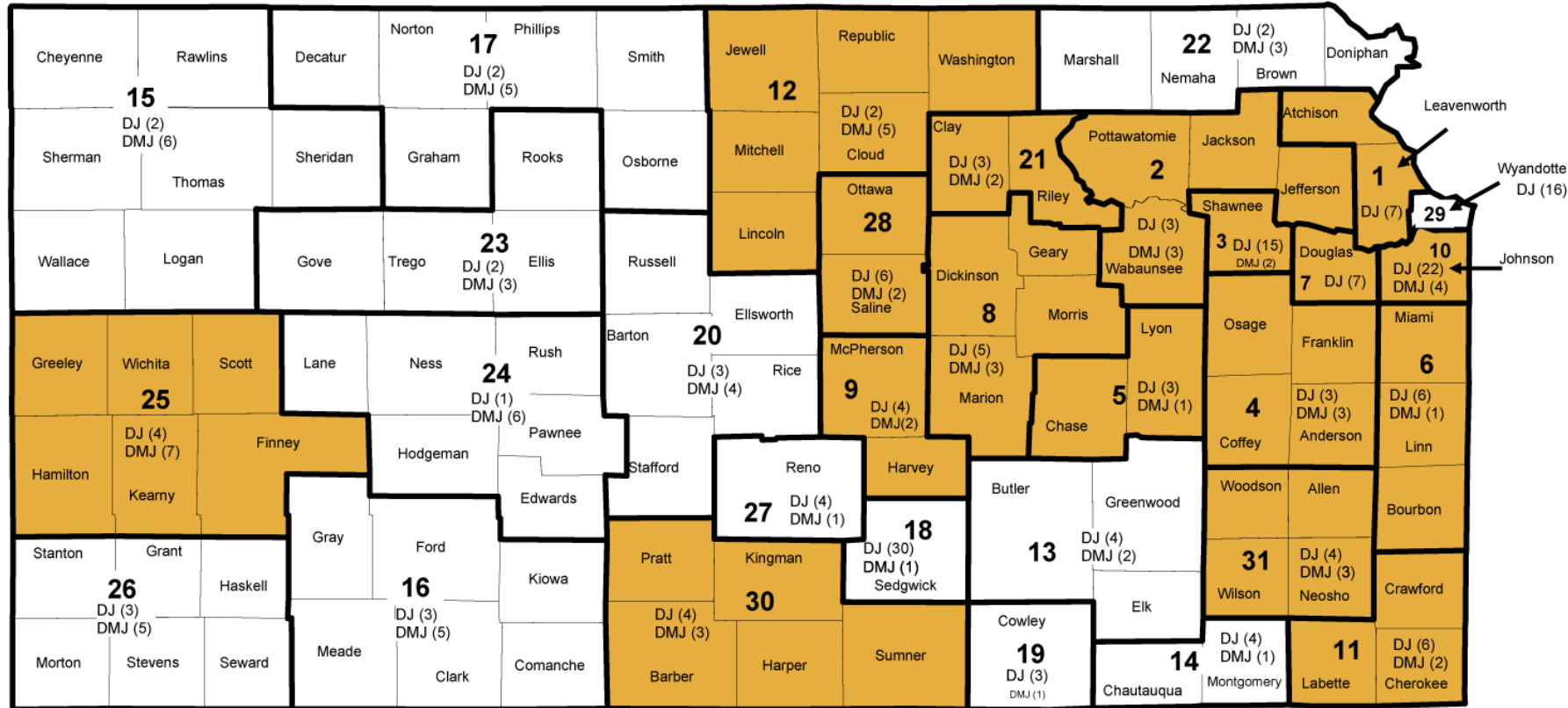
## Merit selection and retention

- When a vacancy in a district judgeship occurs, a judicial nominating commission interviews and recommends from three to five persons to the governor for consideration.
- The governor appoints one of these as a judge to fill the vacancy. The judge is subject to retention vote after each four-year term.

## Partisan ballot selection

- Qualified individuals submit their name(s) to the Secretary of State's Office.

# Judicial selection process



- 45% by political process
  - 53 counties
  - 122 judges
- 55% by merit-selection process
  - 52 counties
  - 147 judges

Political Process: 14 districts or 45% (counties = 53)  
 Merit Selection Process: 17 districts or 55% (counties = 52)

	Elected Judges	Selected Judges	TOTAL
District Judge	79	104	183
District Magistrate Judge	43	43	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>269</b>

# Constitutional officers

## Clerk of Appellate Courts

All documents related to cases coming before the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals are filed in the clerk's office.

## Reporter of Decisions

The Reporter of Decisions publishes Supreme Court rules and decisions from the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Decisions are first printed as advance sheets, which are later compiled in bound volumes called the *Kansas Reports* and *Kansas Court of Appeals Reports*.

# Office of Judicial Administration

Implements the rules and policies of the Supreme Court as they apply to operating and administering the courts.

Office of Judicial Administration staff perform duties related to:

- fiscal operations
- personnel management
- education
- statistical caseload information
- public information
- court services
- administrative support of district and appellate courts

# Office of Judicial Administration

<b>General Counsel</b>	<b>Financial Office</b>	<b>Information Technology</b>	<b>Access to Justice</b>	<b>Trial Court Services</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>
<b>Attorney Services</b>	<b>Judicial Branch Budget</b>	<b>Information Security</b>	<b>Language Access</b>	<b>District Court Relations</b>	<b>Payroll Processing</b>
<b>Attorney Admissions</b>	<b>Central Payments</b>	<b>IT Infrastructure</b>	<b>Juvenile Justice</b>	<b>Electronic Filing</b>	<b>Employee Relations</b>
<b>Attorney Registration</b>	<b>Accounting / Procurement</b>	<b>Network Security</b>	<b>Specialty Courts</b>	<b>Case Management</b>	<b>Classification Compensation</b>
<b>Continuing Education</b>	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>Judicial Center IT Support</b>	<b>Probation Services</b>	<b>Probation Services</b>	<b>Benefits &amp; HR Info</b>
<b>Law Library</b>	<b>Judicial Education</b>	<b>District Court IT Support</b>	<b>CASA &amp; CRB</b>	<b>Jury Management</b>	<b>FLSA / FMLA ADA / EEOC</b>
<b>Policy Compliance</b>	<b>Public Information</b>	<b>Data Management</b>	<b>Court Records</b>	<b>Continuity Planning</b>	<b>Grant Management</b>

# Questions?

# The Legislative Branch



Tom Day

Director of Legislative Administrative  
Services

# Structure of the Legislature

Kansas House: 125  
members

Each member represents  
roughly 23,527 residents

Kansas Senate: 40  
members

Each member represents  
roughly 73,522 residents



# Legislative Leadership

## House Leadership Offices:

- Speaker of the House
- House Majority Leader
- House Minority Leader
- Speaker Pro Tem

## Senate Leadership Offices:

- Senate President
- Senate Vice President
- Senate Majority Leader
- Senate Minority Leader



# Legislative Coordinating Council

Alternates Chair and Vice Chair every other year between Senate President and House Speaker.

All leadership members are on the LCC.

Makes administrative decisions for the legislative branch, and directs LAS.



# Legislative Agencies

Legislative Administrative Services (LAS)

Revisor of Statutes (RS)

Legislative Research (KLRD)

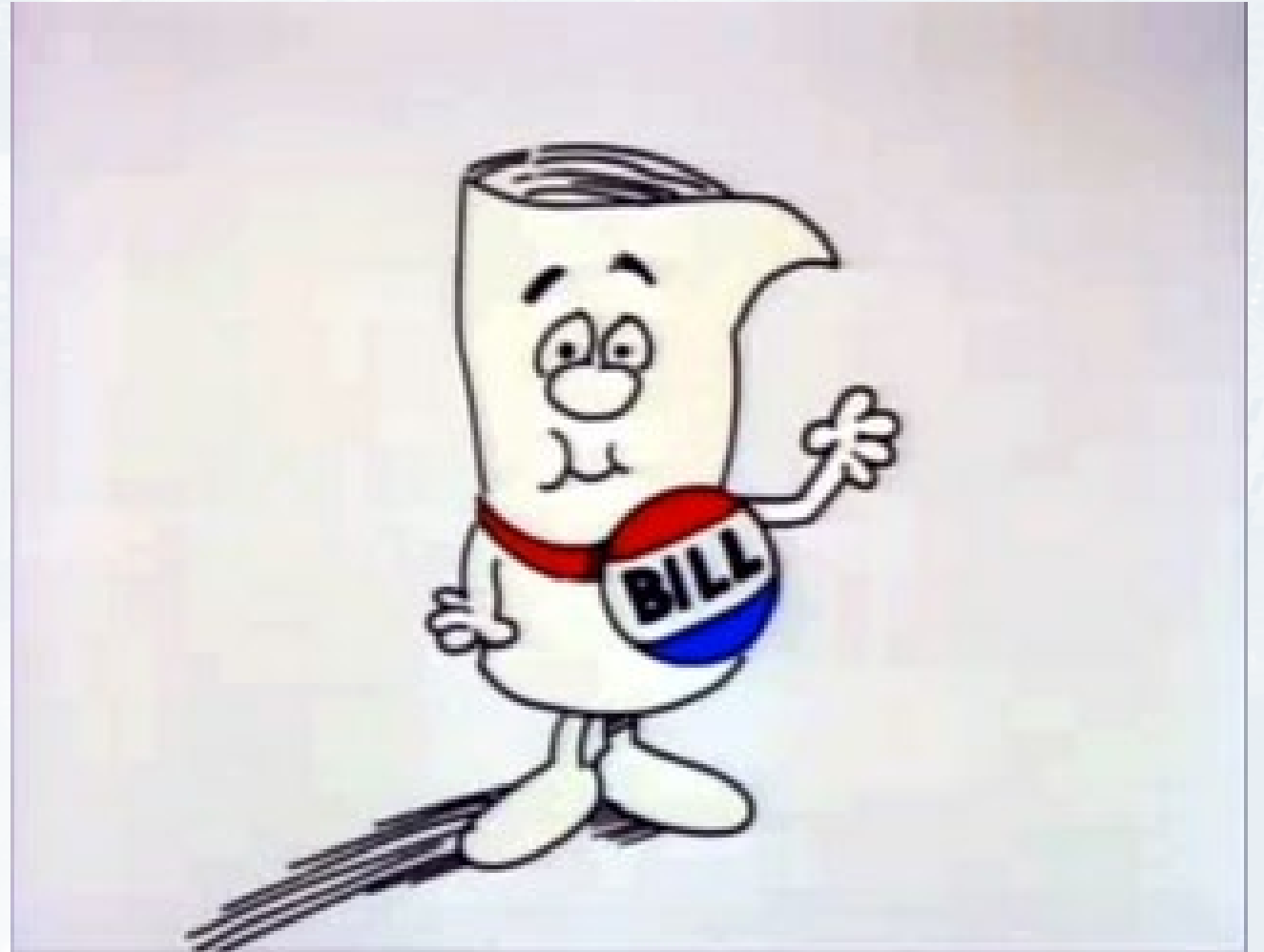
Legislative Post Audit (LPA)

Office of Information Services (LOIS)



# The Legislative Process

- Part time legislature
- Convenes second Monday in January
- Adjournment is called Sine Die
- Must pass a budget every year
- Balance the needs of constituents, interest groups, taxpayers
- Our job to make it possible for legislators to represent their constituents



# Questions?