

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BRIEF
SENATE BILL NO. 403**

As Agreed to March 23, 2026

Brief*

SB 403 would authorize the Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, and Delta Waterfowl license plates; prohibit a license plate with any frame or other object on or around the plate that affects its visibility or legibility; and clarify the definition of “conviction” in the Kansas Uniform Commercial Driver’s License Act.

Authorizing Three License Plates

The bill would authorize issuance of the Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever distinctive license plates on and after July 1, 2026, and the Delta Waterfowl distinctive license plate on and after January 1, 2027, all three for use on a passenger vehicle or truck registered for a gross weight of 20,000 pounds or less.

The bill would establish the procedures for a vehicle owner or lessee to obtain the license plates and the responsibilities of Pheasants Forever, Inc., for the Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever license plates, and Delta Waterfowl Foundation for the Delta Waterfowl license plate. The bill would allow Pheasants Forever, Inc., and the Delta Waterfowl Foundation to set royalties for use of its logo for each license plate at an amount of no less than \$25 nor more than \$100, to be paid at initial issuance and renewal.

The bill would authorize the Director of Vehicles, Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR), to transfer a Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, or Delta Waterfowl license plate from a leased vehicle to a purchased vehicle.

License Plate Legibility

The bill would prohibit a person from attaching or displaying on any vehicle, or operating a vehicle with, a license plate with any frame or other object on or around the plate that affects its visibility or legibility.

For purposes of the bill, “legibility” or “visibility” would mean the ability to determine the alphanumeric registration number assigned, the state of issue, the month of expiration on the

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registration decal, the color of the registration decal, and any other required decal from a reasonably safe distance. The bill would exclude from that definition the ability to determine the abbreviated state designation, the expiration year, and the plate number on the registration decal.

The bill would require a law enforcement officer to issue a warning citation until January 1, 2027, to anyone violating the provisions regarding a frame or other object on or around the plate that affects its visibility or legibility.

Under continuing law, it is unlawful for any person to attach or display on any vehicle, or to operate a vehicle with a license plate that is covered, in whole or in part, with any clear or opaque material or any other plastic-like material that affects the plate's visibility or reflectivity. Also under continuing law, the fine for unlawful display of a license plate is \$60.

The bill also would move a provision regarding secure fastening of a license plate from registration statutes to the Uniform Act Regulating Traffic on Highways and remove an outdated provision.

Clarifying the Definition of “Conviction” Applicable to a Commercial Driver’s License

The bill would clarify the definition of “conviction” to align it with the definition in federal law establishing standards for commercial driver’s licenses.

[*Note:* In an unpublished opinion dated January 2, 2026, in *Vogt v. Kansas Department of Revenue*, the Kansas Court of Appeals found that a diversion agreement did not satisfy the definition of “conviction” in Kansas law as current law requires “both ‘an unvacated adjudication of guilt, or a determination that a person has violated or failed to comply with the law’ *and* {emphasis in the opinion} one of the events enumerated in the remainder of the definition.” The federal definition, in 49 CFR 383.5, does not include that “and.”]

Conference Committee Action

The Conference Committee agreed to the provisions of SB 403, as passed by the House, and added the provisions of SB 325 and HB 2606, both as passed by the House.

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Transportation at the request of Senator Bowers on behalf of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, a representative of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever offered **proponent** testimony, stating the license plate would allow people to invest in the organization’s conservation efforts while supporting the rich upland bird hunting tradition of Kansas.

No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee recommended the bill be placed on the Consent Calendar.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, a representative of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever offered **proponent** testimony substantially similar to that provided to the Senate Committee.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to insert the contents of HB 2585, as amended by the House Committee on Transportation, to include the Delta Waterfowl distinctive license plate and pertinent requirements of distinctive license plates. [Note: The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

HB 2585 (Delta Waterfowl License Plate)

The bill was introduced by Representative W. Carpenter.

House Committee on Transportation. In the House Committee hearing, two representatives of Delta Waterfowl provided **proponent** testimony. They described the work of Delta Waterfowl in waterfowl habitat management and conservation, waterfowl research, and encouraging responsible hunting of waterfowl. They also provided information on its membership in Kansas and nationally.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to direct payments from the royalty fund to the Delta Waterfowl Foundation. [Note: The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

SB 325 (License Plate Legibility)

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Transportation at the request of Senator Warren.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, a representative of Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Peace Officers Association, and Kansas Sheriffs Association provided **proponent** testimony, stating that enactment of the bill would provide a fix to the statutes that is needed in response to the Kansas Supreme Court decision in *State v. Beck* (2025). The proponent also stated that the ability to read a license plate clearly, particularly the state name, is a safety issue for law enforcement officers, allowing them to better identify a risk such as that associated with a stolen vehicle. The proponent also stated moving provisions regarding secure fastening of a license plate into the statute regarding unlawful display of a license plate would make the violation a traffic infraction rather than a misdemeanor.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by representatives of Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP); Kansas State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police; Wichita Police Department; and the League of Kansas Municipalities.

Opponent testimony was provided by a criminal defense attorney. The opponent stated the bill would create ambiguity in the law and increase unnecessary traffic stops.

No other testimony was provided.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, a KHP representative and a representative of the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Peace Officers Association, and Kansas Sheriffs Association provided **proponent** testimony. They stated the bill would clarify law regarding legibility and visibility of license plates and would consolidate law on placement, fastening, and condition of license plates into a statute for which violation is a traffic infraction. They provided information on how officers use information obtainable only when the state name, registration numerals, and letters are readable.

Opponent testimony was provided by a criminal defense attorney, who stated the proposed amendments regarding legibility are ambiguous and a requirement for a fully readable state name should be added to state law and education provided to the public and vehicle dealerships.

No other testimony was provided.

The House Committee amended the bill to require law enforcement officers to issue warnings for violation of the license plate legibility provisions until January 1, 2027. [Note: The Conference Committee retained this amendment.]

HB 2606 (Clarifying the Definition of “Conviction”)

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Transportation at the request of a KDOR representative.

House Committee on Transportation

In the House Committee hearing, an attorney with KDOR and a representative of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) provided **proponent** testimony. The KDOR attorney noted that the Kansas Court of Appeals had determined in a recent opinion that, because of the inclusion of “and” in the Kansas statutory definition, the Kansas definition was not equivalent to the federal definition, which includes non-judicial DUI resolution such as diversion. The KDOT representative stated not making this change would put the State at risk for losing a percentage of annual funding from the National Highway Performance Program and Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and possible decertification of the state’s commercial driver’s license program.

No other testimony was provided.

Senate Committee on Transportation

In the Senate Committee hearing, representatives of KDOT and KDOR provided **proponent** testimony substantially similar to that presented to the House Committee.

No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to change its effective date to be upon publication in the *Kansas Register*. [Note: The Conference Committee did not retain this amendment.]

Fiscal Information

SB 403 (Authorizing Three License Plates)

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on SB 403, as introduced, KDOR indicates enactment of the bill would increase its expenditures by \$7,150 in FY 2027 for administrative costs related to designing and manufacturing the new license plates.

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on HB 2585, as introduced, KDOR estimates the bill would increase its expenditures by \$2,750 in FY 2027 for administrative costs related to designing and manufacturing the new license plate, which would be offset by revenue to the Distinctive License Plate Fund from the sponsoring organization to defray costs for developing the license plate. The bill also could decrease revenues to the State Highway Fund by \$4,000 in FY 2027 if fewer than 100 paid orders were received. [Note: Continuing law requires a sponsoring organization to submit to the Division of Vehicles a non-refundable amount not to exceed \$5,000 to defray costs for developing a new license plate and prohibits the Director of Vehicles from issuing a new distinctive license plate unless there is a guarantee of an initial issuance of at least 250 license plates.]

Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of SB 403 or HB 2585 is not reflected in *The FY 2027 Governor's Budget Report*.

SB 325 (License Plate Legibility)

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on SB 325, as introduced, KDOR and KHP indicate enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on either agency.

HB 2606 (Clarifying the Definition of "Conviction")

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on HB 2606, as introduced, KDOR and the Office of Judicial Administration indicate enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on the agency or the courts.

License plates; Pheasants Forever; Quail Forever; Delta Waterfowl; commercial drivers license; conviction definition; legibility

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