

Kansas Governor

THE ISSUES

**LAURA
KELLY**

DEMOCRAT • INCUMBENT



**DEREK
SCHMIDT**

REPUBLICAN



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LEGAL ABORTION Ban or legal?	Legal. “A woman’s reproductive healthcare decisions should be between her and her physician.” Opposed the proposed amendment removing abortion rights from the state constitution. In 2015 voted against a bill banning a second trimester abortion procedure.	Mostly ban. Is “pro-life” and supported the amendment to end abortion rights . Supports the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Would allow abortions only to save a woman’s life, in cases of rape and incest, and non-viable fetuses. “Hard-earned taxpayer dollars should never fund abortions.”
CLIMATE CHANGE Should climate change be a top priority? Tax or limit the output of greenhouse gases, or support renewable energy?	Mostly yes. Supports effort to reduce carbon output by 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. Backed wind farm construction. Supports sale of gas/ethanol mix to lower fuel prices and CO2 emissions.	Mostly no. Supports a mix of ethanol, biofuels, oil, and gas. Filed a lawsuit challenging Biden’s orders aimed at combating climate change, and opposes a federal measure aimed at increasing clean energy.
EDUCATION Use public funding for private and/or for-profit schools?	Mostly no. Signed a bill expanding business tax credits for private school scholarships, but was “not enthusiastic about... directing taxpayer dollars to private schools” instead of public schools.	Likely yes. Says will “increase the ability for all families to choose the best education option for their child... and put parents and kids first in every education decision.”
EDUCATION How to address the teaching of issues around racism and gender identity?	“I think this (critical race theory) is a nothing burger that’s been cooked up to get people up in arms.” The “legislature should not be legislating curriculum.” Vetoed a bill to give parents the right to inspect and object to their children’s curriculum.	“Critical race theory and ‘woke’ ideology have no place in our schools.” Will sign a “parents bill of rights” so parents can challenge school materials. Wants policies that restrict instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in early grades.
EDUCATION Increase funding for K-12 and higher education?	Yes. Signed bills to fully fund K-12 for the past 4 years. Signed a bill to provide scholarships to community and technical college students in high-demand fields of study.	Yes. “We will fully fund K-12 schools as required by the Kansas constitution.” Regarding Governor Brownback’s K-12 public school funding cut, says “Kansas must never repeat this disaster.”
ELECTIONS Did Joe Biden legitimately win the 2020 presidential election?	Yes. No evidence found of questions about the 2020 election. Regularly refers to Biden as President Biden.	Likely no. Filed a brief supporting a Texas case questioning the 2020 presidential election procedures in four battleground states, saying the case presents important “constitutional questions.” Later said “it is time to put this election behind us.”
ENVIRONMENT Tighten or loosen environmental regulations?	Mixed. Supports a wind moratorium in Flint Hills to preserve the ecosystem. Supports a bill granting money to preserve wildlife in Kansas. Opposes EPA’s regulation of the herbicide atrazine.	Loosen. Supports Supreme Court’s ruling limiting EPA’s regulation of carbon dioxide emissions. In 2016 asked the EPA not to regulate the herbicide atrazine. In 2015, called on the EPA not to implementing new regulations on power plants.
GUN RULES Pass less or more restrictive legislation on guns?	More. Vetoed a bill lowering the concealed carry age to 18. “We can respect...the rights of Kansas gun owners while also taking effective steps to keep our children and families safe.” Supports background checks and red-flag laws allowing courts to take weapons from those who present a risk.	Mostly less. Supports spending more for armed officers and mental health counselors at schools. Opposes credit card companies’ tracking of firearm purchases. Supports strengthening “penalties for gun crimes committed by repeat violent felons.” Is endorsed by and has an A+ from the NRA.

ISSUES	KELLY (D)	SCHMIDT (R)
HEALTH CARE Increase government role in health care, such as expanding Medicaid, limiting drug prices, or promoting COVID safety?	Mostly yes. Supports a bill expanding Medicaid , saying “It’s time to work together to deliver for Kansans.” Imposed a stay-at-home order and mask mandates , but in late 2021 signed a bill limiting vaccine mandates at work . Says will give “no apologies” for the school lockdowns in 2020 .	No. Opposes expanding KanCare, the state-run Medicaid program because it assists able-bodied Kansans without children without a work requirement . Opposed federal mask mandate on public transit and vaccine mandates for workers . Calls 2020 school shutdowns a “disaster.”
IMMIGRATION How to handle immigration? Support a path to citizenship for “DACA” participants brought to the US as children?	Supports securing borders and a comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level . Signed a bill banning local sanctuaries for immigrants . Opposed 2019 attempt to end DACA and said, “This is their home, they belong here.”	Says crime is up in Kansas because “the federal government is failing on border security.” Supports assisting Texas for border security . Introduced a bill banning sanctuary cities . Called a judge’s decision to halt new applications to DACA a “victory.”
LABOR Make it easier or harder for unions to organize?	Easier. In 2016, voted against a bill requiring teachers to vote every three years to continue being represented by a union . “Unions will play a powerful role to improve working conditions for years to come.”	Harder. Supports right-to-work laws and opposed the PRO Act, which “would require workers to face the choice of paying union dues or losing their jobs” and sent a letter asking Congress not to enact it.
LGBTQ RIGHTS Limit or expand LGBTQ rights?	Expand. Vetoed a bill banning transgender athletes from competing in girls’ or women’s sports teams . Signed a bill reinstating protections for LGBT state workers, prohibiting on-the-job discrimination against LGBT state employees .	Limit. Will sign a bill banning transgender athletes from competing in girls’ sports in the first 100 days as governor . Opposes USDA’s plan to withdraw lunch programs if discrimination based on gender identity in schools isn’t prohibited .
MARIJUANA Should recreational marijuana be banned or legal?	Unclear. “We’ll let Kansans give us input over time and if they want us to go for recreational marijuana, we’ll consider it.” Supports legalizing medical marijuana in a “well-regulated” manner .	Ban. Is open to legalizing medical marijuana in limited circumstances, but opposes recreational use . “I already see plenty of destruction from addiction in our society.”
MINIMUM WAGE Keep or raise the state minimum from \$7.25 per hour?	Mostly yes. Said in 2020, “It’s long past time to increase the minimum wage.” “There’s no way around it at this point.” Supports pay raises for highway patrol troopers and state workers at prisons, mental health hospitals, and nursing homes .	No position found.
POLICE AND COMMUNITY How to address police use of force?	Created the Commission on Racial Equity and Justice to “recommend policy actions.” Supports policies “that protect Kansans as well as law enforcement from unnecessary escalation and violence.”	Calls for “unwavering” support for police and restoring trust between them and communities . Supports a police reform bill that includes more training on de-escalation techniques and incentives to wear body cameras .
STUDENT FINANCIAL AID Support lowering interest on student loans or forgiving them?	Unclear. Supports a plan to freeze college tuition at public universities . “College tuition costs are no longer affordable for our students.” No position found on Biden’s student debt forgiveness plan.	No. Calls Biden’s student loan forgiveness plan “a slap in the face,” and filed a joint lawsuit to block the plan . “So unfair to families and students who paid their own way.”
TAXES How to modify state taxes?	Vetoed three bills with business tax cuts as “reckless” and “short-sighted.” Backed a \$1 billion tax-break deal to persuade Panasonic to build a \$4 billion electric car battery factory in Kansas .	Supports eliminating state tax on benefits and income from Social Security, IRAs, annuities, and other retirement incomes . As senator, supported repealing the state’s estate and inheritance tax .
VOTING RULES Support tightened restrictions on such voting rules as absentee and early voting, and voter ID?	No. Vetoed a bill restricting collection and delivery of ballots . Worked to expand voter registration opportunities . Every eligible Kansan deserves an “equal opportunity to cast his or her ballot.”	Yes. Supported bills that required signature verification and made it a crime to help deliver mail ballots . Tried to require first-time voters to prove citizenship . But said: “Kansas elections are solid.”

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