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## Kansas lawmakers back at work on budget deficit

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TOPEKA | Kansas lawmakers returned to work Wednesday to confront the state's \$510 million budget deficit and debate tax increases.

Outside the statehouse the pressure continued to mount, as groups on both sides of the tax debate held rallies that attracted hundreds.

Kansans with disabilities and their caregivers urged lawmakers to end the cuts to social services, while members of Americans for Prosperity protested government spending levels and proposed tax increases.

Lawmakers expect the wrap-up session to last several days or longer as they work through budget and tax proposals. They completed their regular, three-month session last month but didn't address the soaring budget deficit.

"It's time for the rubber to meet the road," said Rep. Kevin Yoder, Overland Park Republican and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

Some legislators prefer additional spending cuts. Others maintain tax increases are needed to preserve funding for social services and education.

The debate got off to a slow start, however, with most of Wednesday's debate focusing on other matters.

The Senate shelved legislation that would impose statewide restrictions on strip clubs and sex shops. The proposed rules, which have been endorsed by the House, would have little or no effect on the metro area, where local zoning rules already restrict the location of adult businesses.

The Senate also defeated the latest attempt to resurrect legislation designed to block federal health care reforms.

The proposed constitutional amendment would, if approved by the Legislature and voters, attempt to prohibit the federal government from requiring most Kansans to buy health insurance. That requirement is a cornerstone to the recently enacted federal health care law.

Various tax proposals include raising alcohol, tobacco and sales taxes and increasing income taxes on Kansans making more than \$200,000 a year.

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