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SPECIAL EDITION

KS legislators despair: \$60M annual cost of psychiatric nurses

BY TIM CARPENTER
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA
The state of Kansas invests more than \$60 million annually to hire contract nursing staff to work at state psychiatric hospitals in Larned and Osawatomie,

but the financial boost hasn't closed job vacancy gaps exceeding 33% at both facilities. Kansas legislators on a special committee exploring contract nursing recently shared disappointment with results of years of stopgap appropriations to hire temporary nurses provided by private companies. The

state also has devoted resources to raising salaries and providing bonuses to encourage state-employed nurses to remain at the hospitals. Lawmakers expressed skepticism Kansas would ever have enough people to fill vacancies at state hospitals serving involuntarily committed or criminally

charged individuals with mental health issues, as well as sexually violent offenders detained at Larned after serving prison sentences. "In my experience, we're not going to build this staff to take care of the number of people that are out there right now," said Rep. Will Carpenter, an El

Dorado Republican who chairs the Legislature's interim health committee. "Prove me wrong, because I want to be wrong." Carpenter suggested consideration be given to transferring about 100 patients from Larned to other locations so staffing levels could be sustained without contract nurses. In 2027, Kansas is scheduled to open a new 104-bed state psychiatric hospital in Sedgwick County. Expenditures at Larned State Hospital for nursing contract labor increased from \$5.9 million in 2019 to \$8.6 million in

SEE NURSES, 3A



Secretary of State Marco Rubio oversees the U.S. Department of State. Since President Donald Trump took office, the State Department has revoked more than 6,000 student visas.

State Department plans to investigate all 55M visa holders

BY LISA HORNING
UPL.com

The U.S. State Department plans to vet all 55 million foreigners in the United States on visas, looking for overstays, threats and "terrorist activity." "The State Department revokes visas any time there are indications of a potential ineligibility, which includes things

like any indicators of overstays, criminal activity, threats to public safety, engaging in any form of terrorist activity, or providing support to a terrorist organization," a State Department spokesperson told The Hill in an emailed statement. "We review all available information as part of our vetting, including law enforcement or immigration records or any other information that comes to

light after visa issuance indicating a potential ineligibility under the [Immigration and Nationality Act]," the spokesperson added. In fiscal year 2024, the State Department issued close to 11 million temporary visas. The majority, 77%, were for business or tourism, while 7% were for students or visiting academics and their families. Since President Donald

Trump took office, the State Department has revoked more than 6,000 student visas. Around 4,000 of those people broke the law, while 200 to 300 had their visas rescinded for "supporting terrorism," according to the State Department. Vetting people who already have visas will likely be time-
SEE VISA HOLDERS, 4A

Remembering Bishop Gilkey: 'Keep your heart right'

BY CARRIE RENGERS
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As young boys growing up in Wichita, Mark Gilkey and Roderrick Houston both knew they one day wanted to be pastors,

but Houston said his friend already seemed to be living his mission. "He always had an idea about how he wanted to live," said Houston, who today is pastor of Greater Harvest Tabernacle Christian Fellowship.

"He's always had a heart to help people. That was just who he was." Bishop Mark L. Gilkey, who was jurisdictional prelate of the Kansas Southwest Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ and senior pastor



Mark Gilkey

at St. Mark Cathedral Church of God in Christ, died Tuesday at 66. After entering the hospital in January, his health complications only grew. However, parishioners, friends and family remember him as a vibrant person who radiated life and love in a way that drew people to him.

SEE GILKEY, 3A

Off-duty cop reflects on confronting gunfire at Towne East

BY ALLISON CAMPBELL
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Great Bend Police Officer Paul Millard spent much of Aug. 9 sitting on a dunk tank platform, grinning as kids lined up their pitches to dunk him. It's not uncommon for the school resource officer to participate in community events. But as the day went on, word quietly spread that a hero was sitting atop the dunk tank. Less than 24 hours earlier, Millard had stopped a 17-year-old with a handgun after a shooting in the parking lot at Towne East Square — action that Wichita police credited with saving lives. "That two day synopsis is a pretty good capture of Paul," said Tim Singleton, First Southern Baptist pastor and a friend of the Millard family. "He will do whatever he can for people, and then he just loves our community, and he loves kids, and he loves trying to make people smile."

Millard said he and his wife, Laura, weren't supposed to be at Scheel's the day of the shooting. The Great Bend couple were making one of their infrequent visits to Wichita on Aug. 8 to do some shopping when, as they were leaving, they overheard a fight between teenagers in the mall parking lot. Then, shots rang out, and Millard leapt into action. "We just happened to walk out at the right time, the right place," Millard said. "I just heard shots fired. (My) training kicked in, and I responded."

PREPARED TO PROTECT
Millard's quick reaction, he said, was the result of years of training — training that began with an unexpected start in law enforcement. Becoming a cop "fell into his lap" after his uncle, a retired Great Bend detective, recruited him. In his 27 years with the department, he has worked on the bike patrol unit, on the SWAT team and as a supervisor. Then, 10 years ago, a school resource
SEE GUNFIRE, 3A



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(Saturday night low and Sunday high)

