



## Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce **KANSAS PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA**

*Approved by the Chamber Board of Directors December 17, 2018*

***Recognizing the economic realities facing the State of Kansas, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's priorities are based on aligning resources with the economic needs of the state focusing on growing the state's economy and are aligned and consistent with the advocacy agendas of our civic and business community partners.***

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION**

#### ***Early Learning***

Research shows that the early years are critical in children's brain development and play a key role in their overall development and shape the adult they will become. Quality early learning programs are vital to preparing students for success in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and sustaining a healthy and growing economy. The Chamber urges the Kansas Legislature to heed the impact of early childhood education and support and preserve adequate investments in high-quality early learning, including those that advance the development of the early education workforce. This includes, support for:

- Measures and investments to preserve the Children's Initiative Fund and Kansas Endowment for Youth.
- Increased investment in home visiting programs that serve young, at-risk children.
- Reducing barriers of accessibility for Pre-K programs for all Kansas students.

#### ***K-12 Education***

The KC Chamber has high expectations for our regional schools and public education systems and believes increased funding, rigorous student achievement standards, and local control are vital to Kansas City's ability to compete in the knowledge-based global marketplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We believe the measures and outcomes highlighted in the Kansans CAN initiative can play a significant role in advancing a well-educated population with technical skills and problem-solving abilities that are key to Kansas City's capacity to innovate, grow, and compete. The KC Chamber calls on the Kansas Legislature to support:

- Policy to assure local authority and control including:
  - Curriculum development and decision-making ability.
  - Financial flexibility and local bonding authority.
  - Authority of elected school boards.
  - Right to request judicial review of state school finance provisions.
- Measures that support and encourage exemplary standards that reflect the knowledge and skills required of students in the existing and emerging sectors of the economy.
- Policy centered on empirically-based student outcomes targets such as those in the Kansans CAN vision for education.

- Policy that is not built on state mandates, scholarship tax credits, tax tuition credits, vouchers, and changes in local board elections including making school board elections partisan.
- Policy to encourage school districts to develop career pathways, internships and apprenticeships aligned to local workforce needs, including dedicated funding for career and technical center cooperatives and innovation centers.

### ***Higher Education & Post-Secondary Opportunities***

The Chamber supports adequate funding and policies to keep Kansas higher education institutions competitive and affordable, help retain graduates and quality faculty in the state, and measures to support alternative postsecondary training options to provide the region and the state with the world-class workforce necessary to meet the job demands of today and tomorrow. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support for full funding as requested by the Kansas Board of Regents for FY 2020 and FY 2021 to ensure Kansas businesses will have work-ready talent they need to succeed in this competitive economy.
- Support measures to stimulate career, technical, and trade education in the state including STEM education and workforce development initiatives designed to enhance the number of qualified employees available for critical jobs in the region.
- Support policy to enable high school students to gain college credit and/or postsecondary certifications and training at any public and not-for-profit institutions in the Kansas City area that offer appropriate programming to support their career interests.
- Support efforts to retain the autonomy of the Kansas Board of Regents and local control for the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees.

### ***Workforce Development***

Kansas City's economic success depends on providing an educated and ready workforce to fill the needs in our community in order to attract new employers to the region. At a time of record-low unemployment and noted skills gap, there is a desperate need for qualified workers among area employers. The Chamber supports policies to reduce barriers to employment and encourage participation in the regional workforce. Policies should foster economic growth and expansion of opportunities for retraining and reentry programs for all workers. The KC Chamber wants to see the greater Kansas City region as a hub for attracting world-class talent. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support state funding for programs that help increase workplace readiness, adult education, and workforce certification programs, including workforce training and re-entry programs for individuals in the criminal justice system and incentives for appropriate businesses to hire those with a criminal background.
- Support state funding for programs that help increase workplace readiness, adult education, and workforce certification programs.
- Support expansion of registered apprenticeship programming and allow for state funded workforce dollars to be used for long-term, mastery objective training
- Support greater transparency and partnership on workforce development programs between the Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, and Department of Education.
- Support measures to expand bistate training, certification and credentialing opportunities.

## **PROSPEROUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The KC Chamber supports a pro-business environment and innovative strategies and investment, such as STAR Bonds, in effective and efficient economic development that will help the Kansas City area grow and remain globally competitive. The Chamber advocates for responsible data-based strategies to increase the availability of capital for new, expanding, and culturally diverse businesses and opposes additional transfers from the Economic Development Incentives Fund (EDIF). The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support efforts to ensure economic development incentives and tools used within the Kansas City metropolitan area are utilized solely for projects that create net new jobs in the Kansas City region.
- Support eliminating administrative red-tape and support of maximum implementation for Federal and State economic development programs, including Opportunity Zones.
- Support adequate staffing and funding to redevelop a robust Department of Commerce to remain globally competitive in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy.

### ***Small, Diverse & Emerging Business***

The KC Chamber supports enhancing initiatives to improve the climate for small business growth including:

- Increased funding for entrepreneur support capacity programs to improve the climate for small and new business growth.
- Making development tax credits transferable.
- Entrepreneurial assistance programs with special consideration for diverse and disadvantaged business.
- Strengthening the commercialization infrastructure at Kansas research institutions and federal research laboratories.
- Reforms to occupational licensing for certain professions, including increased opportunities for reciprocity between states and a requirement for a cost-benefit analysis before creating new or additional regulatory bodies.

### ***Human, Animal, and Plant Sciences***

Support the pursuit of international excellence in life sciences research and development which is a vital tool for job creation in our region and the state.

- Support measures to enhance the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor extending from Manhattan, KS to Columbia, MO., including policies and programs to advance animal health research and development in and around the National Bio-Ag Defense Facility in Manhattan.

## **BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE**

The KC Chamber calls for a climate of legislative and regulatory stability, predictability, and efficiency allowing businesses to plan for growth and expansion including measures below:

### ***Tax Policy***

The KC Chamber supports a balanced tax structure that enables funding of pro-business policy initiatives and eliminates additional reductions in critical programs including education, infrastructure and the wellbeing of all Kansans. The Chamber:

- Opposes expansion of sales tax on professional and labor services.
- Supports the ability of cities and counties to preserve local control and taxing and spending authority including repeal of the requirement for a public vote to approve property tax increases.

### ***Business Climate***

- Support appropriate investments in “safety net” programs and policies designed to protect the vulnerable in our community and help prevent higher business costs in the future by creating a healthier, better educated, and more highly-skilled workforce.
- Support adequate funding of the judiciary and a non-partisan, non-political, non-election process for selecting high quality judges.
- Oppose initiative and referendum.
- Support rights of local units of government, educational institutions, healthcare institutions and other businesses to regulate the carrying of firearms (open or concealed) on their premises.
- Oppose additional fund sweeps.
- Maintain the integrity and affordability of the workers compensation system and the viability of the Employment Security Trust Fund.
- Support added protections for all employees based on sexual orientation or gender identity and oppose legislation that enables discriminatory policies of any kind.
- Support legislation to promote a pro-business legal climate and oppose liability-expanding policies.
- Support measures and financial resources that are dedicated for the planning and implementation of the 2020 Census which ensures accurate representation for federal programs and representation in Washington.
- Support viable measures to maintain the region’s military installations including Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley which are strong economic drivers in the local economy.

### **SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### ***Transportation***

The KC Chamber supports appropriate investment in transportation infrastructure including new and innovative ways to help capture federal investment and fund all modes of transportation throughout the state and region and for the newly established Transportation Task Force to promote and study regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning. The upgrade of roads, highways, waterways, rail, and air travel in an efficient and cost-effective manner will allow the state to meet its transportation-related local, regional and statewide safety, economic development and quality of life priorities. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support for increased state-wide transportation funding to enable key regional priorities, including public transportation.
- Oppose additional transfers from the State Highway Fund and support funding as outlined in the 2010 T-Works Plan.
- Support policies that encourage transportation innovation and policies that enable and encourage autonomous and connected vehicles to be deployed in a safe, efficient and effective manner that promotes local innovation, decision-making and public-private partnerships.

#### ***ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT***

The KC Chamber encourages investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and reliability and supports policies that provide balance between public health and environmental protections without

unreasonable economic burdens on industry, business and Kansas residents. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support development and voluntary use of domestic and renewable energy resources that are considered economical and environmentally-friendly, to deliver energy to the Kansas City region and other high demand areas.
- Support policies and financing options that encourage expansion and development of energy and green infrastructure including alternative fuel and transportation.

### **HEALTHY COMMUNITITES**

The KC Chamber believes there is an undeniable link between the financial health of our businesses and the overall health and wellness of our workforce and that a healthy workforce is paramount to a vibrant regional economy. The KC Chamber supports healthcare, including behavioral health and wellness initiatives that ensure sufficient funding for providers and greater access to coverage for the uninsured. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Medicaid Expansion
  - Support expansion of the state’s Medicaid program to close the coverage gap for working Kansans and ensure adequate funding for health care providers serving the economically disadvantaged in Kansas.
  - Support measures to prepare the state’s Medicaid system to maximize federal funding opportunities.
- Support promotion, advancement and necessary funding to elevate the stature of University of Kansas School of Medicine and the University of Kansas Cancer Center.
- Support an increase in the tax on tobacco products to help increase workforce wellness, employer productivity and reduce health care costs.
- Preserve the right of local governments to implement Tobacco 21 and other policies that improve consumer and community health.
- The KC Chamber is generally opposed to health care benefit mandates and provider mandates.