



**Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**  
**MISSOURI PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA**

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

***Recognizing the economic realities facing the State of Missouri, 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 & EDUCATION**

***Early Childhood Education***

Research shows that the early years are critical in children's brain development, 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 Missouri General Assembly 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:

- Increased investment in home visiting programs that serve young, at-risk children.
- Reducing barriers of accessibility for Pre-K programs for all Missouri 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 21st century. We believe a high quality and accessible K-12 public education plays 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 Missouri General Assembly to support:

- Policy to assure local authority and control including:
  - Curriculum development and policy decision-making ability
  - Financial flexibility and local bonding authority
  - Authority of elected school boards
- Support legislation that mandates standards, accreditation, accountability and transparency criteria for all publicly funded schools.
- Support fully funding the Foundation Formula and prioritize the closure of the current transportation shortfall.
- Support 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 KC Chamber supports adequate funding and measures to keep Missouri higher education institutions competitive and affordable, help retain graduates and faculty in the state, and provide the region and the state with the world-class workforce necessary to compete in the knowledge economy. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support core appropriations requests for the University of Missouri, UMKC, and Metropolitan Community College system; as well as target investments in new assets including a new UMKC Music Conservatory and the MU Translational Precision Medicine Campus.
- Support efforts by the University of Missouri to ensure it retains its status as an AAU university.
- Support programs focused on improving workforce development and efforts to streamline and update job training programs with adequate state funding.
- Support appropriate funding of Access Missouri and the Missouri A+ Schools Program to ensure that all eligible students can receive meaningful tuition support.

### ***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 appropriate investment and early access to A+ funding for qualifying students enrolled in dual credit/dual enrollment courses while in high school.
- Support expansion of registered apprenticeship programming and allow for state funded workforce dollars to be used for long term, mastery objective training.
- 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 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. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support the 2019 Kansas City Consensus Agenda for Economic Development.
- 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.

- Retain existing state economic development incentives and commitments to programs – including MODESA, Chapter 100 bonds, state TIFs, tax credits, the existing Transportation Development District and Community Improvement District statutes, continued state funding (\$3m annually) for the maintenance of the Truman Sports Complex through the current lease of the Kansas City Royals and Kansas City Chiefs, continued state funding (\$2m annually) for the maintenance of the Bartle Hall Convention Center; and continued support for other programs that benefit Kansas City area businesses.
- Support eliminating administrative red-tape and support maximum implementation for Federal and State economic development programs, including Opportunity Zones.
- Support increased funding for the Missouri Department of Tourism.
- Restore funding to the Missouri Partnership.

### ***Small, Diverse & Emerging Businesses***

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

- New business development incentives for science and technology-based business to increase technical capacity through support of programs such as the Missouri Technology Corporation to support early stage capital.
- Continue simplifying the personal-property tax abatement process for technology-based companies.
- Reforms to occupational licensing for certain professions, including increased opportunities for licensing reciprocity between states.

### ***Human, Animal & 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 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.

## **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 Missourians. The Chamber:

- Supports measures to extend the earnings tax legislation for Kansas City, Missouri from a five-year term to a 10-year term with voter approval.
- Supports a fair and equitable taxation system that provides sufficient funding for the state's infrastructure, education and research/innovation needs.
- Supports continuation of the 1/8<sup>th</sup> cent sales tax for the Conservation Department without a sunset.
- Supports reinstating the Missouri film rebate program as a tool for economic development.
- Supports maintaining funding for low-income housing tax credits.
- Opposes any efforts to restrict or undermine local control for Kansas City.
- Supports funding for the Missouri Arts Council, including the Non-Resident Professional Athletes and Entertainers Tax (A&E Tax) as well as funding for the Missouri Fine Arts Academy.

## ***Business Climate***

- Support measures to protect employers from frivolous lawsuits, including:
  - Tort reform measures to address forum-shopping abuse
  - Reform asbestos litigation, curb Missouri Merchandising Practices Act lawsuits, limit excessive punitive damages
  - Eliminate joint and several liability.
  - Support the enforceability and validity of fair arbitration agreements between employers and at-will employees that provide for mandatory and binding arbitration to address and resolve employment-related claims.
  - Oppose legislation to weaken non-compete laws.
- Support added protections, including the Missouri Human Rights Act, for all employees based on sexual orientation or gender identity and oppose legislation that enables discriminatory policies of any kind.
- The Chamber supports modernization of the state’s initiative petition and referendum process to ensure a fair and transparent process.
- 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 Whiteman Air Force Base and Fort Leonard Wood which are strong economic drivers in the local economy.
- Support the modification of term limits in the Missouri General Assembly.
- Support the prohibition of campaign fundraising when the General Assembly is in session.
- Support adequate funding of the judiciary and a non-partisan, non-election process for selecting high quality judges.
- Support improvement of the 911 system by allowing counties to ask voters to renew a sales tax to support the 911 system.

## **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. 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 adequate state-wide transportation funding to enable key regional priorities.
- Support measures to encourage regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning.
- Support 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.
- Support providing state and local jurisdictions with new and innovative policy and tax tools, such as transportation districts, vehicle miles traveled (VMT)/fuel tax adjustments, user-based fees, mobility authorities and public/private partnerships, with revenues dedicated to meeting the funding jurisdiction’s critically important transportation priorities.

### ***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 Missouri 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 affordable and reliable energy to the Kansas City region and other high demand areas.
- Support policies that encourage expansion and development of energy and green infrastructure including alternative fuel, transportation and financing options.

### **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

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 sufficient funding for providers and greater access to coverage for the uninsured. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support legislation that creates a fully-operational state-wide prescription drug monitoring program.
- Maintain and advance increased access to Medicaid for low-income, vulnerable and uninsured residents of Missouri and for healthcare providers serving the economically disadvantaged in Missouri. Assure strong Federal Reimbursement Allowance funding for providers.
- The KC Chamber is generally opposed to health care benefit mandates and provider mandates.