



2019 KANSAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY AND ISSUE REPORT CARD



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

The Legislature passed a bill adding \$90 million to school funding in accordance with a Kansas Supreme Court order to account for inflation. The bill also instituted more accountability measures for school districts to give further transparency in achievement rates within each district. The bill received bipartisan support and support from Governor Laura Kelly despite late opposition from various education groups. The Kansas Supreme Court will consider the constitutionality of the funding later this summer.

Despite a request from the Kansas Board of Regents and support from the KC Chamber for an additional \$50 million for the state's public universities, the institutions will receive just over \$34 million in increased base funding including the 2.5% state employee pay increases across-the-board and restoration of the allocation from FY 2017.

The Chamber was pleased to see the Legislature pass the AO-K to Work Program requiring the Kansas Board of Regents to award a high school equivalency credential to any qualified student who is approved to participate in an AO-K career pathway for college credit and meets other KBOR requirements. However, the Chamber was disappointed that a bill that would have made it easier for students to gain experiential learning opportunities by reducing employer liability on manufacturing floors did not see action from either chamber this year.

The Chamber is encouraged to see the passage of the Criminal Justice Reform Commission and looks forward to actively participating in the process to encourage the state's criminal justice system to expand reentry and reemployment programs for ex-offenders which not only reduces recidivism rates, but also expands the available talent pool for employers.

The Chamber applauds the Legislature for giving serious consideration to adequately funding our K-12 schools and to beginning the restoration of the detrimental cuts to higher education. The Chamber also supports the Legislature for expanding the capacity for Kansans to become certified and trained to enter the workforce. The Chamber will continue to advocate for opportunities to grow Kansas' pipeline of workforce talent as our members believe workforce to be an economic development driver for our communities and incentivizes businesses to relocate to our area or expand existing operations.

TRANSPORTATION:

Pursuant to the recommendations of the 2018 Transportation Vision Task Force, the Legislature passed a handful of transportation-related bills that support KC Chamber transportation policy requests. The Legislature allocated \$166.4 million for Kansas Department of Transportation in FY2020 for certain needs including finishing T-Works projects, and also allocated an additional \$50 million to FY2019 for local projects with a requirement of a 25% local match.

The Chamber commends the Legislature's passage of a bill allowing expanded tolling across the state for projects that create new roads or increase capacity on existing roads. As recommended by the task force, electric and hybrid vehicle fee increases were also passed in 2019. The new vehicle registration fees are projected to bring in over \$600,000 in additional revenue for the state.

The Legislature did not act on passing a new comprehensive transportation plan as advocated by the Chamber. The Chamber offered its new Big 5 initiative to be a resource to legislators throughout the various hearings this year. The Chamber's Transportation Initiative stresses the necessity for adequate funding, strategic planning, and unique innovation to ensure Kansas' transportation systems adapt to changing mobility needs of business and workforce.

MEDICAID EXPANSION:

Despite the House passing Medicaid Expansion through a remarkable procedure, the Chamber was disappointed to see the Senate fail to move the bill out of committee and act on the measure. Veto session efforts by a coalition of House moderate republicans and democrats to hold up the passage of a budget were upended upon guarantees that Medicaid Expansion would be studied in the summer and action would be taken in the 2020 legislative session. The Chamber has been a top voice for Medicaid Expansion for several years and continues to call on the Legislature to support programs that provide greater access to coverage for uninsured individuals which will prepare the state's Medicaid system to maximize federal funding opportunities.

THANK YOU TO KANSAS LEGISLATIVE LEADERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF THESE PRIORITIES:

The business-friendly policy priorities the KC Chamber advocates for on the behalf of our over-2,000 members are vital to maintaining economic vibrancy of our metropolitan region. The KC Chamber thanks Kansas legislators, legislative leadership and policy makers who supported these business policy priorities as adopted by the KC Chamber and encourages the Legislature to maintain these critical legislative victories and to work next session to expand Medicaid, increase workforce development initiatives, and secure a long-term transportation plan to ensure Kansans' economic vibrancy which will foster growth across the state.

2019 PUBLIC POLICY COUNCIL >>>

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