



## Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce 2020 MISSOURI PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

*Approved by the Chamber Board of Directors November 18, 2019*

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION**

#### ***Early Childhood Education***

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 childhood programs that support early learning, healthy development, and strong families 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 adequate investments in high-quality early learning, including those that advance the development of the future workforce and promote comprehensive, coordinated systems at the state and local levels. This includes support for:

- Strategies to develop a pipeline of human capital, including recruitment and retention of a quality workforce to educate our youth;
- Measures and investments that improve programs for young and at risk-children including home-visiting programs and implementation of the Early Childhood Quality Rating System;
- Reform the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (CBEC) changing the board structure and composition including adding legislator representatives, requiring an annual report, adopting a conflict of interest policy and granting the board the authority of to hire an executive director subject to appropriations; and,
- Reducing barriers of accessibility for full-day and full-year quality birth through 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 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 measures to enhance teacher preparation, recruitment and retention;
- Support simplification and investment in the process for certifying teachers to teach dual credit courses;
- 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;
- Support measurements that delineate the outcomes of graduates with a post-secondary success measure;
- Support appropriate investment and early access to dual credit/dual enrollment programs, including A+ funding, for qualifying students enrolled in dual credit/dual enrollment courses while in high school; and,
- Policies and funding that support community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives in our schools.

### ***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, expedite the accreditation process for programs in high-demand fields 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, the University of Missouri System NextGen Precision Health Initiative and a Manufacturing Institution at MCC through MOExcels funding;
- Support efforts by the University of Missouri to ensure it retains its status as an AAU university;
- Continue supporting programs focused on improving workforce development and efforts to streamline and update job training programs with adequate state funding including Fast Track; and,
- 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 including reliable transportation to access jobs across the region. 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;

- Support appropriate investments in work and family support programs and policies that help families meet basic needs while lowering business costs and creating a healthier and more productive workforce;
- Increase access to child care assistance for working families;
- Support workforce training, re-entry programs and other criminal justice initiatives that encourage returning citizens and other at-risk citizens to become employed;
- Support expansion of registered apprenticeship programming and allow for state funded workforce dollars to be used for long term, mastery objective training; and,
- 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 2020 Kansas City Consensus Agenda for Economic Development;
- Continue supporting 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 maximum implementation for Federal and State economic development programs, including Opportunity Zones;
- Retain existing state economic development incentives and commitments to programs;
- Supports maintaining funding for workforce housing tax credits;
- Support increased funding for the Missouri Department of Tourism; and,
- 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.

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

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

- Increased funding for entrepreneur support capacity programs and assistance, including those targeted for diverse and disadvantaged business, to improve the climate for small and new business growth;
- 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; and,
- Reforms to occupational licensing for certain professions, including increased opportunities for licensing reciprocity between states.

## **BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE**

In an environment of increased interaction of commerce, goods and services between the state, 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 and fiscal responsibility 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 election for Kansas City, Missouri;
- Supports a fair and equitable taxation system that provides sufficient funding for the state's infrastructure, education and research/innovation needs;
- Opposes any efforts to restrict or undermine local control for Kansas City including the ability of cities and counties to preserve local control and taxing and spending authority;
- Support the fair collection of internet sales tax revenues for the state and local governments to ensure Missouri businesses are competitive in the global economy;
- 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; and,
- 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.

### ***Regulatory Climate***

- Support measures to improve Missouri's legal climate, including:
  - Limit excessive punitive damages;
  - Reform asbestos litigation, curb Missouri Merchandising Practices Act lawsuits, and set a reasonable outer time limit (statute of repose) on lawsuits involving older products;
  - Eliminate joint and several liability;
  - Maintain historic standards for public nuisance claims;
  - Oppose legislation to weaken non-compete laws.
- Support added protections, including the Missouri Human Rights Act, for all employees based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression 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 that are dedicated for the planning and implementation of the 2020 Census which ensures accurate representation for federal programs and representation in Washington;
- Support the modification of term limits in the Missouri General Assembly; and,
- Support adequate funding of the judiciary and a non-partisan, non-election process for selecting high quality judges.

### ***Military Affairs***

The KC Chamber supports stable funding for the military Services at a level that maintains end Strength necessary to ensure our forces' readiness and lethality; efforts to increase the quality of life for Service members and their families, including more opportunities for spousal employment and better connection to jobs for those who transition out of the military; and investments in infrastructure and capacity at our region's installations and within the defense industrial base.

- Support reciprocity of professional licenses between the states for military spouses, including expedited issuances of new licenses;

- Ensure that K-12 schools that serve high percentages of military-connected students adopt rigorous academic standards and provide a well-rounded educational experience;
- Better align research and development efforts at Missouri’s universities with DOD’s modernization priorities;
- Support better state and regional efforts to identify and retain transitioning Service members by connecting them with jobs in the region and ensure access to educational and training benefits; and,
- Support measures to provide for the formation of the National Security Crossroads between Missouri and Kansas.

## **SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

### ***Transportation***

The KC Chamber supports appropriate investment in transportation infrastructure including effective and innovative ways to help capture federal investment and fund all modes of transportation throughout the bistate and region. The upgrade of roads, highways, waterways, rail, freight 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 providing for local jurisdictions to implement 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;
- Support measures to encourage regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning; and,
- Support policies that encourage transportation innovation 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 policies that encourage safety across our transportation systems.

### ***Energy & Environment***

The KC Chamber encourages investments in renewable energy, balanced energy solutions, 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; and,
- Support policies that encourage expansion and development of energy and green infrastructure including alternative fuel, transportation.

## **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.

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 funding especially for strong Federal Reimbursement Allowance funding for providers;
- Support for statewide and/or local implementation of Tobacco 21 and other policies that improve consumer and community health;
- Generally opposed to health care benefit mandates and provider mandates; and,
- Support policies that reduce violent crime in Missouri's metropolitan areas.