



Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

2022 MISSOURI PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Approved by the KC Chamber Board of Directors November 15, 2021

The KC Chamber, representing nearly 2,000 employers and over 300,000 employees of these members in the greater Kansas City area, is committed to working across state, county and community lines to advocate for a robust business community, inclusive prosperity and sustainable solutions to close opportunity gaps in economic development, education and workforce development, social and criminal justice, and healthcare. We believe that our residents and businesses know best how to govern their communities and manage their economies. We support policies that enhance the Kansas City region's national reputation as a great place to live, work and visit. Working together, we will continue to make Kansas City a top place to work and live.

COVID RECOVERY

The KC Chamber is committed to helping Kansas City area businesses and employers respond to the coronavirus pandemic-induced economic downturn by advocating for science-informed healthy policies that help businesses stay open, keep employees safe and on the payroll, and ensure a robust and inclusive economic recovery. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support tax relief and tax certainty for employers and employees impacted by the coronavirus pandemic to ensure workers are not doubly taxed while working remotely; including provisions that would:
 - Explicitly provide for employees to continue to be taxed as they were as of February 2020 no matter where the employee has been working,
- Support for increased adoption and access to reliable broadband access for businesses and students, alike;
- Support for responsible use of Rescue Act Funds;
- Support investment and measures to increase the lending capacity of community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to support small and minority business;
- Support for businesses affected by COVID-19, especially disadvantaged businesses in distressed areas; and,
- Support for the extraordinary needs of educators, students and childcare providers during the pandemic.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION

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. The Chamber supports policies to improve quality education opportunities for Pre-K-20. The Chamber supports policies to reduce barriers to employment and encourage participation in the regional workforce. Policies should foster a quality and able workforce ready for the 21st Century economy and policies that make greater Kansas City region as a hub for attracting world-class talent. The Chamber takes the following positions:

Early Childhood Education

- Support strategies to develop a pipeline of human capital, including improved opportunities for recruitment and retention of a quality workforce to educate our youth;
- Support for the Early Learning Quality Assurance Report (QAR) pilot program; and,
- Support reform of 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.

K-12 Education

- Support policy to assure local authority of school boards;



- Support standards, accountability, and transparency for all public schools that reflect the knowledge and skills required of students in the existing and emerging sectors of the economy;
- Support non-partisan school boards elections;
- Support capping the amount of money paid to for-profit virtual education providers per credit hour to the cost of what a school district is paying for its in-district virtual school provider per credit hour;
- Support fully funding the Foundation Formula, funding equity for all schools including charters, and prioritize the current transportation shortfall;
- Support necessary investment in special education services and ESOL;
- Creation of a competency-based education taskforce and innovation fund;
- Support measures to enhance teacher diversity, preparation, recruitment and retention;
- Support public education policy that is not built on state mandates, scholarship tax credits, tax tuition credits, and vouchers;
- Support measures to assist and incentivize competency-based education including the Real World Learning model being piloted in the greater Kansas City area; development of career pathways, internships and apprenticeships aligned to local workforce needs; and dedicated funding for career and technical center cooperatives and innovation centers; and
- Support appropriate investment and measures to increase dual credit/dual enrollment programs, including A+ funding; and,
- Support policies and funding that sustain community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives in our schools.

Higher Education & Post-Secondary Opportunities

- Support core appropriations requests from the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development for public higher education institutions for the 2022-2023 fiscal year;
- Support efforts by state lawmakers to capture federal research funding for all Missouri public universities;
- Support investments in new assets including:
 - University of Missouri System NextGen Precision Health Initiative,
 - NextGen Data Science and Analytics Innovation Center,
 - Manufacturing Institute at MCC through MOExcels funding,
 - Missouri Innovation Center at the University of Central Missouri;
- Support efforts by the University of Missouri to ensure it retains its status as an AAU university; and,
- Support appropriate funding of Access Missouri and the Missouri A+ Schools Program.

Workforce Development

- Support state funding for programs that help increase internships, apprenticeships, workplace readiness, adult education, and workforce certification programs;
- Support policies to make the state and the greater Kansas City region more attractive and accessible to the immigrant workforce;
- Support increased access to childcare for working families;
- Support policy and innovative strategies to improve access to safe, quality, healthy, affordable workforce housing;
- Support policy changes to the Missouri Fast Track program to encourage greater enrollment of students;
- Support insurance coverage for school-sponsored activities in businesses to encourage employer participation in real-world learning opportunities for students;
- Support workforce training, re-entry programs and other criminal justice initiatives that encourage returning citizens and other at-risk citizens to become employed; and,
- Support measures to expand bistate training, certification, reciprocity 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 for the 2022 KC Consensus Agenda on 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;
- Support eliminating administrative red-tape;
- Support programs that will advance Federal and State economic development investment including Opportunity Zones, workforce housing tax credits, LIHTC, Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs), historic tax credits, Missouri Technology Corporation, appropriate funding for Missouri Department of Tourism, and measures to enhance the Animal Health Corridor and National Security Crossroads initiative;
- Support efforts that expand access to the increased availability of SSBCI funding from the federal government to build long-term capital infrastructure for entrepreneurs; and,
- Support for Right to Start policies that grow entrepreneurial capacity in the region for small, diverse and emerging businesses.

BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE

In an increasingly complex 21st century economy, 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:

- Support measures to extend the earnings tax renewal authorization period for Kansas City, Missouri;
- Supports a balanced tax structure and fiscal responsibility that enables funding of pro-business policy initiatives and eliminates additional reductions in critical investments;
- Support reinstating the Missouri film rebate program as a tool for economic development, funding for the Missouri Arts Council, including the Non-Resident Professional Athletes and Entertainers Tax (A&E Tax);
- Support 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;
- Support equitable and data-informed policies that reduce violent crime in Missouri's metropolitan areas;
- Support policies to secure and enforce the right to vote and make voting safe and accessible for all voters, while maintaining election integrity;
- Support measures to improve Missouri's legal climate, including reform of asbestos litigation, address nuclear verdicts, set a reasonable outer time limit (statute of repose) on lawsuits involving older products, reduce personal injury statute of limitations from 5 years to 3 years, preempt brand name drug manufacturer liability for copycat generic products sold by competitors (innovator liability), reduce judgment interest rates, eliminate joint and several liability, maintain historic standards for public nuisance claims and oppose legislation to weaken non-compete laws or expand liability;
- Support added protections for all employees based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and oppose legislation that enables discriminatory policies of any kind;
- Support modernization of the state's initiative petition and referendum process to ensure a fair and transparent process; 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.

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 and to promote and study regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning. 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, workforce development and quality of life priorities. The Chamber takes the following positions:

- Support existing statewide transportation planning and dedicated funding mechanisms and sources;
- Support for increased state-wide transportation funding to enable key regional priorities, including public and multi-modal transportation needs, and to leverage for federal funding opportunities;
- Support policies that enable and encourage autonomous and connected vehicles to be deployed in a safe, efficient, and effective manner, and that promote local innovation, decision-making, and financing options including public-private partnerships (P3s);
- Support policies that encourage safety across our transportation systems including the implementation of a primary seatbelt law; and,
- Support and expand opportunities for passenger and freight rail services, including restoring funding for twice-a-day service for the Missouri River Runner.

Digital Equity and Broadband

The KC Chamber considers digital access, and the increased adoption of broadband, essential to participation in the 21st century economy and the Chamber believes it is vital that all Missourians have access to affordable and reliable internet. The KC Chamber supports public-private partnerships with internet service providers to build and maintain broadband infrastructure throughout the state.

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 supports the development and voluntary use of affordable and reliable energy resources, including natural gas, to deliver energy to Kansas City and other high-demand areas.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

There is an undeniable link between the financial health of our businesses and the overall health and wellness of our workforce. A healthy workforce is paramount to a vibrant regional economy. The KC Chamber supports measures to advance quality healthcare, including telehealth and 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 full implementation and funding of voter-approved Medicaid Expansion;



- Support statewide and/or local implementation of Tobacco 21 and other policies that improve consumer and community health;
- Support increased public health infrastructure funding and the equitable allocation of public health resources; and,
- Generally opposed to healthcare benefit mandates and provider mandates.