PUBLIC POLICY

KANSAS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

THE CIVIC COUNCIL OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

KC CHAMBER

Week of March 20th, 2023

This was the last week for non-exempt committees to meet and work non-exempt bills. The House worked on their version of a mega tax bill and passed out the K-12 Education Budget. The Senate passed their version of the Budget this week. Both Senate and House worked on a bill relating to childcare reform, with the Senate voting it out of their chamber and the House planning to hold a vote next week. Next week both the Senate and the House will be on the floor Monday through Wednesday to pass out legislation. The Legislature will be on a break Thursday and Friday and come back to work Conference Committees before breaking for three weeks in April.

House Tax Bill

The House Tax Committee held a hearing on a bill that would combine a flat tax, social security tax credit, and food sales tax into one bill. HB2457 would provide a flat income tax rate of 4.95%, moves the state food sales tax to 0% on July 1st, 2023, and would exempt social security taxes. The Senate ran three separate bills on the floor, and their flat tax rate would be 4.75%, move social security and retirement taxes to zero, and would bring food sales tax to zero at the state and local levels. Later in the week the House Tax Committee amended HB 2457 into the Senate Tax bill SB 169. In there they amended the bill to move the flat tax to a 5.25% rate. The House plans to vote on this tax bill next week. The KC Chamber opposes the flat tax as there appears to be a shortage of clear data showing how it would impact the state budget and all Kansas tax payers in the short and long term. The KC Chamber and KC Civic Council will continue to follow this legislation as it works itself through the legislative process.

For more information on H. Sub for SB 169 visit:
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/sb169/

Tobacco 21

The Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee held a hearing on HB 2269 which would raise the minimum wage to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. In 2019, legislation was signed to raise the federal minimum age for sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21. Since then, over 30 states have enacted their own legislation to raise the purchase age of tobacco to 21 and in Kansas over 25 cities and counties have passed similar ordinances. If Kansas does not enact legislation, the state could lose up to $2 million in grants from the federal government. HB 2269 will bring Kansas into compliance with federal law. The House passed this bill with a vote of 68-53. There were no opponents to this bill. The KC Chamber provided testimony urging the committee to pass out HB 2269 favorably.

For more information on HB 2269 visit: http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/hb2269/

Senate Budget

The Senate passed their version of the budget this week. SB 155, the appropriations bill for the next fiscal year, would spend around $23 billion but does not include the Governor's recommendation for Medicaid expansion or a five percent raise for state workers. On the floor an amendment was added that would cut 3.25% from state agencies amounting to roughly $97 million dollars. An amendment to expand Medicaid was also brought to the floor and was rejected by a vote of 11-22. The Senate version of the budget passed with a vote of 23-12. The House will work on their version of the budget next week before the Senate and House meet in conference to start negotiations on a final budget. In Kansas a budget must be passed before the Legislative session can end.

For an in-depth description of the Senate budget visit:
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/documents/bill_exp_sb155_01_0000.pdf

House K-12 Budget

The House debated and passed out their K-12 budget bill this week. H Sub for SB 113 would fund K -12 education for the next fiscal year but also included nine other education bills including allowing private school students the opportunity to take part in extracurricular activities at public schools, and expanding the local option for tax levies to allow districts to raise taxes for salary increases for teachers. The bill did not include funding for special education. The bill passed with no democrat support with a vote of 75-48. The KC Chamber/ KC Civic Council will continue to advocate for a budget that fully funds public education including funding special education at a constitutional level.

For more information on the K-12 Budget bill visit:
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/SB113/

Childcare Reform

A bill dealing with childcare reform was worked in both the House and Senate committees this week, with the Senate also working on the legislation on the floor. HB 2344 and SB 282 would establish and update law regulating childcare centers and childcare homes. The bill would provide certain definitions, expand capacity and staff-to-child ratios, and establish staffing requirements, including professional development training.

The proponents re-worked the bill after the first hearing and made amendments to HB 2344 in the Senate Commerce committee. Amendments were also made to reduce the annual in-service training requirements for staff. SB 282 was also introduced in the House Health committee which held a hearing and worked on the bill the same day. Proponents cited the current childcare crisis for the urgency of passing the legislation. Opponents would like to wait until a study by the Kansas Children's cabinet is released this spring and then work on legislation in the interim. The Senate debated their version of the bill and passed out the legislation with a vote of 21-17. The House plans to debate their version next week.

The KC Chamber and KC Civic Council know there is a childcare crisis in Kansas and have called out the need for legislation to expand childcare access in our agendas. We are currently short around 84,000 much needed childcare spots in our state. We understand the urgency and encourage the legislature to hold an interim committee to continue to work on legislation to address this crisis.

For more information on HB 2344 and SB 282 visit:
http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/hb2344/

http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/sb282/

Hearings

The hearing schedule for next week is linked below.

House: http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/chamber/house/calendar/2023/3/

Senate: http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/chamber/senate/calendar/2023/3/

To watch House/Senate Legislative Hearings please visit the Kansas Legislature's YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_0NO-Pb96CFABvxDwXAq8A

Key Upcoming Dates

March 29th – Last Day for Non-Exempt Bills in Either House
April 6th – Drop Dead Day – First Adjournment
April 26th – Veto Session Begins
April 29th – 90th Day

KC Chamber Kansas State Affairs Committee Meeting

Friday, April 21st

Noon – 1:15

Register Today kabraham@kcchamber.com