



Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce  
**2018 Kansas Public Policy Agenda**  
*Approved by the KC Chamber Board of Directors November 27, 2017*

*Recognizing the economic realities facing the State of Kansas, 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, including the Civic Council of Greater Kansas City.*

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The KC Chamber supports a pro-business environment and innovative strategies and investment, such as STAR Bonds, in effective and efficient economic development and 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 business and opposes additional transfers from the Economic Development Incentives Fund (EDIF). The Chamber takes the following positions:

- 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 increased availability of capital for new and expanding businesses without diluting existing incentives.

### ***Small, Diverse & Emerging Business***

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

- Measures to reduce barriers to occupation and employment including a requirement for a cost-benefit analysis before creating new or additional regulatory bodies
- Seed capital fund and angel investor tax credits and proof of concept grant funding
- Making development tax credits transferable
- Adequate funding for incubators
- Entrepreneurial assistance programs with special consideration for diverse and disadvantaged business.
- Strengthening the commercialization infrastructure at Kansas research institutions

### ***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 Kansans. The Chamber:

- Supports an increase in the tax on tobacco products.
- Opposes expansion of sales tax on professional and labor services.
- Supports 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.

### ***Immigration***

The KC Chamber calls for a federal resolution to immigration reform that addresses business needs and supports measures to assure an adequate workforce that includes skilled and unskilled workers and allows for peaceful undocumented persons to contribute to the regional economy.

## ***Human, Animal, and 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 the 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 and development in and around the National Bio-Agro Defense Facility in Manhattan.
- Support promotion, advancement and necessary funding to elevate the stature of University of Kansas School of Medicine and the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

## ***Business Climate***

The KC Chamber calls for a climate of legislative and regulatory stability and predictability allowing businesses to plan for growth and expansion including measures below.

- Support appropriate investments in “safety net” programs and policies designed to protect the vulnerable in our community and help prevent higher business costs in the future by creating a healthier, better educated, and more highly-skilled workforce.
- Support adequate funding of the judiciary and a non-partisan, non-political, non-election process for selecting high quality judges.
- Oppose initiative and referendum.
- Support for 21st Century connectivity across the state.
- Support rights of local units of government, educational institutions, healthcare institutions and other businesses to regulate the carrying of firearms (open or concealed) on their premises.
- Oppose additional fund sweeps.
- Maintain the integrity and affordability of the workers compensation system and the viability of the Employment Security Trust Fund.
- Support policies to eliminate discrimination.
- Support legislation to promote transparency and fairness in litigation.
- Support viable measures to maintain the region’s military installations which are strong economic drivers in the local economy.

## **TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT**

The KC Chamber supports appropriate investment in transportation infrastructure including Public-Private Partnerships (with supporting legislation) and other 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.

- Support state and federal funding to assist the metro area in making needed improvements to the I-70/I-435 interchange near Village West, the I-70/Turner Diagonal interchange, and key transportation infrastructure projects in Johnson County.
- Oppose additional transfers from the State Highway Fund and support funding as outlined in the 2010 T-Works Plan.
- Support the implementation of an effective multi-modal transportation program aligned with the region’s economic priorities the use of alternative project delivery methods that accelerate schedules and increase innovation opportunities.
- Support measures to encourage regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning.
- Support policy and measures to enhance freight movement with all modes of transportation through the region.

- Support the practice of long-term, multi-year comprehensive transportation programs developed through a combination of KDOT technical analysis with local partner consultations and focused on meeting the state's transportation-related local, regional and statewide safety, economic development, and quality of life 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 Kansas residents.

- Support development and voluntary use of domestic and renewable energy resources that are considered economical and environmentally-friendly, to deliver energy to the Kansas City region and other high demand areas.
- Support policies and financing options that encourage expansion and development of energy and green infrastructure including alternative fuel and transportation.

## **HEALTHCARE**

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, behavioral health, and wellness initiatives that ensure sufficient funding for providers and greater access to coverage for the uninsured.

- Medicaid Expansion
  - Support expansion of the state's Medicaid program to close the coverage gap for working Kansans and ensure adequate funding for health care providers serving the economically disadvantaged in Kansas.
  - Support measures to prepare the state's Medicaid system to maximize federal funding opportunities.
- Support an increase in the tax on tobacco products to help increase workforce wellness, employer productivity and reduce health care costs.
- Preserve the right of local governments to implement Tobacco 21 and other policies that improve consumer and community health.
- Support initiatives that encourage physicians, dentists, and allied health professionals to practice in the Kansas City region.
- Support regional approaches to public safety, including emergency first-responders.
- The KC Chamber is generally opposed to health care benefit mandates and provider mandates.

## **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 21st century workforce and sustaining a healthy and growing economy. The Chamber urges the Kansas Legislature 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, but is not limited to support for:

- Measures and investments to preserve the Children's Initiative Fund and Kansas Endowment for Youth.
- Increased investment in home visiting programs that serve young, at-risk children.

## ***K-12 Education***

The KC Chamber has high expectations for our public education systems and believes increased funding, rigorous student achievement standards, and local authority and control are vital to Kansas City's ability to compete in the knowledge-based global marketplace of the 21st century. We believe the measures and outcomes highlighted in the Kansan's CAN initiative can play 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. In support of this critical mission, the KC Chamber calls on the Kansas Legislature to support the following:

- Policy to assure local authority for curriculum development and provide school districts with greater decision-making ability and financial flexibility to efficiently and effectively operate their education systems to meet the unique needs and extraordinary circumstances of their districts. This includes, but is not limited to, opposing limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority.
- Measures to assure the education needs of all Kansas students will be met.
- Preservation of funding for full-day kindergarten.
- Measures that support and encourage exemplary standards that reflect the knowledge and skills required of students in the existing and emerging sectors of the economy.
- Policy centered on empirically-based student outcomes targets such as those in the Kansans CAN vision for education.
- Policy that is not built on state mandates, scholarship tax credits, tax tuition credits, vouchers, and changes in local board elections including making school board election partisan.

## ***Higher Education & Workforce Development***

The Chamber supports adequate funding and policies to keep Kansas higher education institutions competitive and affordable, help retain graduates and quality faculty in the state, and measures to support alternative postsecondary training options to provide the region and the state with the world-class workforce necessary to meet the job demands of today and tomorrow.

- The KC Chamber calls for full restoration of the 2016 cuts to higher education funding so that funding amounts appropriated for the next two years will reflect pre-allotment levels.
- Support measures to stimulate career, technical, and trade education in the state including STEM education and workforce development initiatives designed to enhance the number of qualified employees available for critical jobs in the region.
- Support policy to enable high school students to gain college credit and/or postsecondary certifications and training at any public and not-for-profit institutions in the Kansas City area that offer appropriate programming to support their career interests.
- Support efforts to retain the autonomy of the Kansas Board of Regents and local control for the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees.



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