



## 2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### **Economic Development**

The availability of competitive, straightforward, and flexible economic development and workforce training assistance programs is vital to the State of Kansas. The Chamber supports:

- Preserving and enhancing existing programs and credits, including High Performance Incentives Program (HPIP), Providing Employment Across Kansas (PEAK), Kansas Industrial Training (KIT), and Kansas Industrial Retraining (KIR).
- Ensuring the Department of Commerce continues to have abundant resources and staffing to compete globally for investment and job growth.
- Efforts to reestablish a state venture capital fund or other mechanism to spur growth in bioscience research and development.
- Restoring funding for the Arts to the level it was in 2011 when Kansas became the first state to de-fund its arts commission.
- Promoting Agritourism as a tool for economic development, particularly in rural areas of the state.
- Retaining Home Rule and Local Control of community development financing tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Transportation Development Districts (TDD), and tax abatements.
- Creating tax incentives to entice new film or television production activity in Kansas. Refundable or transferable tax credits and/or exemptions from sales tax on qualified transactions could capture significant income from the growing streaming, TV, and film industry.

### **Education, Workforce, and Child care**

Recognizing that the availability of a trained and competent workforce is the number one economic issue across the state, The Chamber supports:

- Fully funding the Excel in Career and Technical Education bill that passed into law on July 1, 2012.
- Creating legislation to authorize the Douglas County Commission to call an election for the establishment of a special taxing district to support the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center
- Fully funding the Kansas Board of Regents 2023 requests so that our state universities and KU can:
  - Recruit and retain talented students, faculty, and scientists.
  - Address inflationary costs, especially in light of the fact that KU has held tuition flat for four consecutive years.
  - Develop a new Wichita Health Sciences Education Campus to enable KU to enhance its training of healthcare practitioners and provide medical care to underserved Kansas communities.
- Compliance with the Kansas Supreme Court ruling on public school funding.
- Further collaboration among all relevant stakeholders (Pre-K, K-12, higher education, early childhood education providers, technical educators, community colleges and the business community) in the area of workforce training.
- Maximizing the use of matching federal dollars for Child Care Development Block Grants (CCDBG) by committing additional State General Fund dollars to early care and education.
- Expanding Child Care Assistance Tax Credits and making them accessible to more businesses.
- Creating a cabinet level child care department to lead the state in developing collaborative, innovative solutions to the child care crisis for working parents.
- Explore the benefits of universal pre-K education in Kansas.

## **Taxation**

Kansas must have a balanced and diversified “three-legged” tax structure that is fiscally responsible, provides the services and amenities important to business growth and retention, and fosters a competitive, pro-growth business environment.

The Chamber supports:

- Efforts to make state tax policy and reporting requirements more business friendly, especially for small businesses.
- Efforts to reduce the regressive impact of the sales tax on food. We look forward to the opportunity to weigh in on any specific proposals in the coming session.

The Chamber opposes:

- Any change in tax law that would apply a sales tax on professional services, thereby negatively affecting our competitiveness with neighboring states.
- Any legislative efforts to increase the state sales tax rate.
- Employer increases to unemployment withholdings.

## **Transportation, Infrastructure, and Housing**

The Chamber strongly encourages the Legislature to plan for future infrastructure needs, including transportation, water, sewer, technology, and others.

The Chamber supports:

- Efforts to accelerate broadband penetration and promote investment in broadband infrastructure.
- Expanding the K10 Highway between Lawrence and I-435.
- Consideration of additional interchanges along K10 Highway to capitalize on Panasonic opportunities, if needed.
- Preserving of long-term transportation programs and funding at the federal, state, and local levels. Future state transportation programs must retain, at a minimum, the level of funding in the 2010 legislation.
- Protecting existing transportation funding sources (sales tax, fuel tax, bonding, vehicle registration fees, etc.) and discontinuing the diversion of funds from the Kansas Highway Fund, effective FY 2023.
- Creating innovative incentives to spur the development of housing of all kinds.
- Incentivizing residential development by expanding the Rural Housing Incentive District (RHID) beyond just rural counties to help address housing shortages.
- Extending the Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) program. Douglas County is suffering a homelessness and housing crisis and ending this program will exacerbate the problem.
- Investments in Lawrence Regional Airport through the Kansas Airport Improvement Program (KAIP) to improve the safety of this transportation infrastructure and expand its economic impact.

## **Legal Reform**

The Chamber believes that a well-functioning legal system is essential to sustainable economic development.

The Chamber supports:

- Criminal justice reforms aimed at reducing prison populations, intentionally addressing racial disparity, and eliminating barriers to reentering the workforce.
- Efforts to decriminalize poverty by addressing fines, cash bond requirements, driver’s license reinstatement fees, etc.
- Adequate funding for the courts.

## **Health Care**

The Chamber believes that access to health care is one of the keys to a productive and efficient workforce and is a top consideration in locating and operating a business.

The Chamber supports:

- Expansion of Medicaid to close the coverage gap for working Kansans.
- Measures to prepare the state's Medicaid system to maximize federal funding opportunities.
- Increases in Medicaid rates to ensure adequate funding for health care providers serving the economically disadvantaged.
- Strategies and solutions that would help control health care costs, improve outcomes, expand access, support wellness initiatives, and create a culture of health in the workplace.
- Efforts to return funding of Community Mental Health Centers to at least 2007 levels and restore the promise of mental health reform.
- Increasing the state's inpatient capacity to 300 through regional psychiatric hospital sites.
- Ongoing funding and implementation of the Medicaid housing programs approved by the 2018 Legislature.

## **Energy**

As technology and innovation bring changes to the energy sector, businesses have new opportunities to lower their energy costs and reduce their carbon footprint. Businesses and all consumers should be free to make smart energy choices, such as installing solar panels or purchasing electric cars, without paying exorbitant fees that hinder innovation.

The Chamber supports:

- Growth of the renewable energy industry in Lawrence and in Kansas, including an equitable balance of customer rates and increased opportunities for distributed solar generation without unreasonable rates or fees.
- Fair and equitable policies governing the allocation of electric energy rates that ensure continued reliability as well as balancing the interests of consumers, including Kansas businesses.
- Legislation and programs that encourage our public utilities, citizens, businesses, and local governments to invest in energy efficiency improvements to reduce energy cost burdens.
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive, long-term state energy plan that responsibly addresses current issues with future needs and certainty.
- Remove barriers that restrict the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.