

February 23, 2011

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Governor, State of Kansas

The Honorable Anthony Hensley
Minority Leader, Kansas Senate

The Honorable Steve Morris
President, Kansas Senate

The Honorable Arlen Siegfried
Majority Leader, Kansas House of
Representatives

The Honorable Mike O'Neal
Speaker, Kansas House of Representatives

The Honorable Paul Davis
Minority Leader, Kansas House of
Representatives

The Honorable Jay Emler
Majority Leader, Kansas Senate

Across the State of Kansas local chambers of commerce work with their respective business communities to best represent their business interests and further the growth of business investments and jobs. Several of these local chambers have been meeting since 2009 to discuss statewide issues that impact local communities. State government has a tremendous role in the successful retention of local businesses and jobs and expansion of businesses, new investment and the creation of new jobs. Local chambers, governed by local businesses, believe it is important to discuss with you how statewide decisions affect efforts to grow businesses and jobs in cities and hometowns across our great state.

The coalition of Kansas local chambers, representing 16,201 businesses, small and large, recognizes the difficult choices state government has been faced with over the last couple of years with dwindling revenues. We offer our views on important variables impacting business growth:

- Kansas must maintain and enhance its competitive business climate to enable local chambers to retain and create jobs in our communities. Our state received several accolades last year for its ability to maintain and grow businesses. This position has been achieved through strong support for business issues by previous Legislatures and Governors as favorable tax policy has been approved, and support provided for needed incentives to make our state attractive to growing investment and jobs. We ask these tools remain in place to support local chambers as they create business growth.
- Business growth is tied closely to quality of life. We compete internationally for business expansions and new business growth. Local communities continue to make strides in bettering Kansas communities to attract the type of worker that

businesses need. Important to businesses considering Kansas as a place to make capital investment is the quality of K-12 education and excellence in higher education from our universities, community colleges and technical colleges.

- Businesses need good highways and alternate modes of transportation to move product and provide safe transportation for employees. Kansas has shown its commitment to excellent transportation by approving and funding for the third time a comprehensive transportation plan. It is important that this commitment continue into the future.
- Unstable tax policy is not favorable to business growth. Businesses value suitable tax levels that do not drastically vary from year to year. Local businesses rely on government services while expecting efficient and effective use of public dollars. Every time there is movement to significantly change tax policy, such as discussions to initiate sales tax on professional services or the elimination of tax exemptions, businesses become nervous and are inclined to consider moving out of the state.
- There are concerns about the lack of federal attention to immigration issues; however, creating further regulations for business regarding immigration and penalizing them for unintentional errors or fraud committed by an employee or potential employee is not in the best interest of growing the Kansas economy. Immigration is an issue best dealt with at the federal level rather than creating multiple laws throughout the states that complicate compliance for employers.
- Kansas operates with a representative government that has served this state well over time. Local chambers are concerned with attempts to change state laws to embrace initiative and referendum. In states with initiative and/or referendum, business interests must continually battle increased business regulations at the ballot box. Business dollars spent fighting ballot issues reduce funds available for business expansions and additional jobs.
- Businesses are wary of artificial tax caps that require super-majorities to override the tax cap. States that have such laws have difficulties maintaining economic competitiveness and a quality of life conducive to attracting new workers and companies. Representative governance works.

The twenty-one local chambers listed below look forward to working with you, Governor Brownback and Legislative Leaders, as the 2011 Legislature continues.

Creating jobs in Kansas is the responsibility of local chambers across our state. We are excited to work to move this state's economy forward. We look forward to working with you and all the legislative members to attract quality jobs and investment to our great state. We applaud your leadership and dedication to the State of Kansas, its people and its businesses.

Sincerely,

Abilene Area Chamber of Commerce - Cindy Issitt, President
Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce – Janet Siebert, President & CEO
Derby Chamber of Commerce – Rhonda Cott, President
Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce – Jeanine McKenna, IOM, President & CEO
Garden City Area Chamber of Commerce – D. Paul Joseph, CCE, President
Grant County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism – Marieta Houser, Director
Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce – Dave Kerr, President
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce – James A. Heeter, President & CEO
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce – Tom Kern, President & CEO
Leavenworth-Lansing Area Chamber of Commerce - Tim Holverson, IOM, Executive
Vice President
Liberal Chamber of Commerce – Rozelle Webb, IOM, Executive Director
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce – Lyle Butler, IOM, President & CEO
Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce - Deb Settle, President & CEO
Olathe Chamber of Commerce – L. Frank Taylor, President
Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce – Tom Weigand, President & CEO
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce – Tracey Osborne, CCE, President
Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce – Blake Benson, IOM, President
Salina Area Chamber of Commerce – Dennis Lauver, CCE, President
Shawnee Chamber of Commerce – Linda Leeper, IOM, President & CEO
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce – Doug Kinsinger, CCE, President & CEO
Wellington Area Chamber of Commerce – Shelley Hansel-Williams, Executive Director