



2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



EDUCATION

Education excellence is the single most important factor to stimulate economic prosperity and growth in the state of Kansas. The Shawnee Chamber of Commerce has in the past, and will continue to support adequate funding for schools in order to provide quality education with the increasing standards of No Child Left Behind. The Chamber will continue to support the following initiatives:

1. The state must provide additional funding for an adequate and suitable education for all Kansas children, as identified in the legislative post audit report.
2. The state's support should be the foundation for an adequate and suitable education but not a ceiling on educational opportunities for school districts striving for excellence. Allow locally elected boards to determine budget priorities based on local needs without state imposed percentage requirements on selected categories of the budget.
3. Support increases to Base State Aid per Pupil and Special Education funding slated to go into effect through prior legislation. Oppose any cuts to present funding toward Base State Aid per Pupil and Special Education funding.
4. Support a responsible, long-term state-funding plan for public education.
5. Support allowing school districts to provide fully-funded, but optional, all-day kindergarten.
6. Support increased local authority, allowing districts to provide programs that meet the needs and desires of local communities. State equalization assistance should be provided to districts with lower assessed valuation. The gap in the funding of districts should be closed by increasing high enrollment weighting each year.
7. Support a redistribution of state funding to provide increased support for those districts that have unfunded excess special education costs.
8. Support full state funding to provide Special Education, ESL and At-Risk programs for students.
9. Support change to the formula that recognizes differences in costs of school districts according to the geographic region of the state the district is located within.
10. Support funding for higher education to keep Kansas institutions competitive.
11. Support innovative, university programs promoting math and science (M&S) such as a loan forgiveness program for graduates to teach M&S in Kansas K-12. Support K-12 increasing emphasis for students on M&S curriculum.
12. Support funding measures to address deferred maintenance on university infrastructure in the state.
13. Support correction of unintended consequences of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (i.e. alternatives to measuring AYP, changes to assessment requirements, limiting effects of Limited English Proficient children).
14. Support increasing the federal investment in public education to fully fund the government's share of the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To continue to facilitate a strong and diverse economy, the Chamber supports business and economic development legislation that promotes business growth and expansion.

1. Support the continued development of the infrastructure aimed at increasing entrepreneurial ventures and commercialization partners.
2. Support enhanced funding of the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) through the Kansas Lottery. The Chamber supports either raising the \$50 million cap on lottery funds earmarked for EDIF or building, into the reauthorization, an annual percentage increase in funding for EDIF.
3. Support reducing the administrative burden for small businesses to apply for state economic development incentives and tax credits.
4. Support rescinding the 2006 eminent domain legislation and returning the authority back to local control.
5. Support job creation through tax initiatives focused on technical and bioscience workforce training.
6. Support tax policies that foster competitive positioning for Kansas businesses within national and global markets.
7. Support the revision of Kansas business incentives to compete in the national marketplace by shifting from a reliance on tax credits to a cash-based incentive program.
8. Support the broadening of qualifying criteria for the statutory property tax exemption from exclusively for manufacturing firms to a wider array of basic enterprises more reflective of the modern economy.
9. Support the Kansas Tourism Initiative (KTI) to provide for an organizational structure that better adapts to a changing marketplace of tourism.

TRANSPORTATION

The Chamber recognizes the importance of basic infrastructure to the economic health, job growth, public safety and overall quality of life. It supports funding of a comprehensive transportation program for 2009 and beyond to include all forms of transportation—highway, rail, public transit, intermodal and air. It also supports measures to encourage regional approaches to public transit and funding and to transportation planning.

ANIMAL HEALTH/BIOSCIENCE

1. Support funding for the University of Kansas Cancer Center's efforts to achieve NCI designation.
2. Support legislation to authorize local governments to issue special obligation bonds to fund bioscience redevelopment costs.
3. Oppose legislation that restricts life sciences or its industry in Kansas. Prolonged state legislative debate could potentially prove detrimental to our state's ability to attract cutting-edge research and commercial enterprises.
4. Support education and workforce development focused toward the life sciences, including veterinary and agricultural programs.
5. Encourage the legislature to continue to explore opportunities to position Kansas as the center for animal health bioscience research, innovation and commercialization.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

1. Support the development of a long-term energy plan that balances environmental and cost benefits, while ensuring reliable and ample power for the region.
2. Support policies that promote investment in energy efficiency measures.
3. Support incentives to promote sustainability for consumers, businesses and communities.
4. Support development and voluntary use of alternative fuels and energy resources that are economical and environmentally friendly, including policies that support expansion of wind energy and development of transmission systems to deliver alternative energy to the Kansas City area.
5. Support actions by the state of Kansas to promote affordable solutions to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in state government operations.

HEALTH CARE

Health care costs continue to rise at an alarming rate, which puts a tremendous financial burden on the business community to provide health care benefits to their employees. The federal government has not been willing to address this issue in ways that result in incentives for business owners to provide health care coverage for their employees. The Chamber supports initiatives that result in an enhanced health care delivery system and initiatives, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Support legislative initiatives that ensure employers have the flexibility to provide cost effective health care coverage for their employees.
2. Support removing the barriers to suppliers of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) related products to foster greater competition and consumer services for HSAs.
3. Oppose health insurance mandates that put undue financial demands on employers who provide group insurance benefits for their employees.
4. Support state and federal programs to provide adequate funding for senior medical coverage.
5. Support and encourage open-market access to health care within and outside the U.S. In the event of passage of Small Business Health Plan enabling legislation in the U.S. Congress, the state should ensure that the necessary legislation is in place in order to allow Kansans the immediate ability to pool risk and take advantage of this type of health care offering.

STATE SPENDING CAPS

The Chamber remains opposed to placing lids on state and local taxing authority or imposing artificial spending lids, which restricts the ability of government to respond to growth in a timely manner or make needed investments in the future of the economy for the state. This includes opposing the "supermajority" vote by state or local governing bodies to approve tax increases.

The Shawnee Chamber of Commerce recognizes the fiscal and philosophical legislative challenges facing the State of Kansas. In view of this, the Chamber supports initiatives deemed crucial to our business community, including education excellence for the continued economic development in our city, county and state.

Developed by the 2009 Governmental Affairs Committee of the Chamber,
and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce on December 17, 2008.

2009 Governmental Affairs Committee

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2009 STANDING POSITIONS ACTIVELY PROMOTED WHENEVER THE ISSUE OR OPPORTUNITY ARISES

POSITIONS ARE NOT PRESENTED IN PRIORITY ORDER

SUPPORT: An ongoing review of the taxation system to maintain an equitable, competitive and progressive position. Sales, income, property and other taxes should be reviewed and balanced to meet the needs of the state without compromising the economic competitiveness of the state.

OPPOSE: Sales tax on services.

SUPPORT: Protection of Tax Increment Financing tools (TIF).

OPPOSE: Changes to the current sales tax situs law on motor vehicles.

OPPOSE: Tax policy changes that simply shift the tax burden to business and/or other levels of government.

SUPPORT: Enforcement of the tax law requiring fair market valuation of property taxes throughout the state.

SUPPORT: Regulatory framework for results in consistent and predictable application of state policies, procedures and regulations.

SUPPORT: Current state of Kansas status as a right to work state.

SUPPORT: The retention of all current exceptions to the Kansas Open Records Act, which protect the confidentiality rights and interests of private business.

SUPPORT: Full implementation of 2007 phased repeal of the state's franchise tax.

SUPPORT: Improvements to the worker's compensation system that would insure businesses would not be liable for pre-existing injuries, thus, resulting in cost savings to Kansas businesses.

OPPOSE: Binding arbitration in employment disputes.

OPPOSE: Initiative and referendum.

SUPPORT: Continued monitoring of the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund to insure the balance neither reaches excessive levels nor places any undue burdens upon business.

OPPOSE: Legislation that would either materially alter the current selection process for Supreme Court justices or shift an inappropriate level of control over judicial nominations to the legislative branch; thereby threatening the independence of the judiciary and the balance and separation of powers between the three branches of government.

UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITED

