

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

Positions	Action/Status
Support the continued development of the infrastructure aimed at increasing entrepreneurial ventures and incentives to small businesses.	HB 2551 allows the Dept. of Commerce to issue “recovery zone bonds” that include, among other uses, research grants and facilities for studying alternative energy sources or the commercialization of existing alternative energy technologies.
Support maintaining 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.	No change to EDIF occurred in this session.
Support expansion of Kansas business incentives to compete in the national marketplace by shifting from reliance on tax credits to cash-based incentive programs.	Senate Sub for Sub of HB 2538 (also HB 2554) expands the PEAK program to allow withholding employee taxes for businesses that have relocated to Kansas or expanded a portion of their business operations in the state of Kansas, so long as the median wage of the new jobs is equal to or greater than the median wage paid in the county where the jobs are located.
Support reducing administrative burden for small businesses to apply for state economic development incentives and tax credits	No changes noted.
Support rescinding the 2006 eminent domain legislation and returning the authority back to local control.	No changes noted.
Support job creation through tax initiatives focused on technical and bioscience workforce training.	HB 2551 allows the Dept. of Commerce to issue “recovery zone bonds” that include, among other uses, research grants and facilities for studying alternative energy sources or the commercialization of existing alternative energy technologies. Senate Sub for Sub of HB 2538 (also HB 2554) expands the PEAK program to allow withholding employee taxes for businesses that have relocated to Kansas or expanded a portion of their business operations in the state of Kansas, so long as the median wage of the new jobs is equal to or greater than the median wage paid in the county where the jobs are located.
Support tax policies that foster competitive positioning for Kansas businesses within national and global markets.	Sen. Sub for HB 2360 imposes a new 1 cent sales tax on all sales in Kansas through July 1, 2013, at which point the sales tax will be reduced by .6 cents. Also increased the income tax threshold for food sales tax rebates.
Support the broadening of qualifying criteria for the statutory property tax exemption from exclusively manufacturing firms to a wider array of enterprises more reflective of the modern economy.	No changes noted.

Support the Kansas Tourism Initiative (KTI) to provide for an organizational structure that better adapts to a changing marketplace of tourism.	No changes noted.
Oppose any changes to the 2009 legislation which created Community Improvement Districts (CID's).	No changes noted.
Support the continuation of the Promoting Employment Across Kansas (PEAK) program with KEDA Competitiveness Task Force suggested amendments.	Senate Sub for Sub of HB 2538 (also HB 2554) expands the PEAK program to allow withholding employee taxes for businesses that have relocated to Kansas or expanded a portion of their business operations in the state of Kansas, so long as the median wage of the new jobs is equal to or greater than the median wage paid in the county where the jobs are located. It also allows businesses to utilize both the PEAK and IMPACT programs, although not on the same employees.

EDUCATION

Education excellence is one of the most important factors to stimulate economic prosperity and growth in the state of Kansas. The Chamber continues 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:

Positions	Action/Status
Support changes to the school finance formula that would reallocate funding to be more consistent with the findings of the independent study by Legislative Post Audit (LPA) and oppose any further reductions to districts that are currently funded below the LPA recommendation.	SB 359 changed the catastrophic aid formula for special education students to drastically reduce the amount that local school districts could recover for their expenditures.
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.	No changes occurred.
Support a redistribution of state funding to provide increased support for those districts that have unfunded excess special education costs and oppose any changes to the special education catastrophic aid law until a fairer distribution of all special education funding is achieved.	No changes occurred.
Support funding for higher education to keep Kansas institutions competitive.	No changes occurred.
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.	No changes occurred.
Support funding measures to address deferred maintenance on university infrastructure in the state.	No changes occurred.

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare costs continue to rise at an alarming rate, which puts a tremendous financial burden on the business community to provide healthcare benefits to their employees. Given the impending federal healthcare reform bills being proposed, the Chamber will continue to monitor the final results. At that time, the Chamber will re-address its current healthcare position. The Chamber supports initiatives that result in incentives for business owners to provide health care coverage for their employees and an enhanced healthcare delivery system and initiatives, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

Positions	Action/Status
Oppose health insurance mandates that put undue financial demands on employers who provide group insurance benefits for their employees.	Senate Sub for HB 2160 requires insurers to cover autism spectrum disorder (within certain financial parameters) and orally administered anticancer medications on a basis no less favorable than IV or injected cancer medications. SCR 1615 also was passed in response to the recently passed federal health care legislation, and expressed that “Kansas serves notice and demands the federal government cease and desist mandates beyond the scope of the constitutionally delegated powers,” among other things, including calling on Congress not to pass legislation which exceeds the powers conferred upon it by the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution, among other sources.
Support removing the barriers to suppliers of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) related products to foster greater competition and consumer services for HSAs.	No changes occurred.
Support and encourage open-market access to healthcare 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 healthcare offering.	No changes occurred.

TRANSPORTATION

Positions	Action/Status
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, multi-year transportation program 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. The Chamber supports maintaining all transportation funding from the state to city and county governments to meet their transportation needs.	Sen. Sub. Of HB2360 allocates .4 cents of the sales tax increase to funding of the State Highway Fund. Sen. Sub. Of HB 2650 provides for the creation of the T-Works program, which will be a new, ten year, comprehensive transportation program in the state of Kansas funded to the tune of approximately 8.2 billion dollars, and includes funding for transit, rail and aviation, as well as highway and other road projects. HB 2561 also allows for transit systems in Johnson County to allow their buses to move along the shoulder of highways when the speed of travel on the highway is otherwise less than 35 MPH, and such buses may not exceed that of other traffic by more than 10 MPH. HB 2552 enacted the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact, whose purpose is to promote improvements to intercity passenger rail service in a 12-state region.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Positions	Action/Status
Support the development of a long-term energy plan that balances environmental and cost benefits, while ensuring reliable and ample power for the region.	HB 2551 allows the Dept. of Commerce to issue “recovery zone bonds” that include, among other uses, research grants and facilities for studying alternative energy sources or the commercialization of existing alternative energy technologies.
Support policies that promote investment in energy efficiency measures.	HB 2551 allows the Dept. of Commerce to issue “recovery zone bonds” that include, among other uses, research grants and facilities for studying alternative energy sources or the commercialization of existing alternative energy technologies.
Support incentives to promote sustainability for consumers, businesses and communities.	No changes noted.
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.	No changes noted.
Support actions by the state of Kansas to promote affordable solutions to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in state government operations.	SR1809 resolves that the leaders of the State of Kansas call upon the EPA to withdraw the rule calling greenhouse gases a “toxic pollutant” and encourages regulation of such gases through legislative process, not administrative rule-making.

ANIMAL HEALTH/BIOSCIENCE

Positions	Action/Status
Support funding for the University of Kansas Cancer Center’s efforts to achieve NCI designation.	No funding was withdrawn from the Cancer Center’s efforts.
Support legislation to authorize local governments to issue special obligation bonds to fund bioscience redevelopment costs.	HB 2551 allows the Dept. of Commerce to issue “recovery zone bonds” that include, among other uses, research grants and facilities for studying alternative energy sources or the commercialization of existing alternative energy technologies.
Support education and workforce development focused toward the life sciences, including veterinary and agricultural programs.	No changes noted.

OPPOSE TAX OR SPENDING LIDS

Position	Action/Status
The Chamber opposes TABOR/Proposition K or any other efforts to place lids on state and local taxing authority or efforts to impose 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” 2/3 vote by state or local governing bodies to approve tax increases.	TABOR or its equivalent was not passed in this session.

Standing Positions Actively Promoted Whenever the Issue or Opportunity Arises	Action/Status
SUPPORT: An ongoing review of the taxation system at state level 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.	Sen. Sub. Of HB 2360 provides for an increase in sales tax of 1 cent for the next three years. SB 430 also makes certain “haircuts” of income tax credits.
OPPOSE: Implementation of new sales tax on services not currently taxed.	Sen. Sub. Of HB 2360 did not impose any sales tax on services, despite debate on the issue.
SUPPORT: Protection of tax increment financing tools (TIF) and other economic development initiatives.	No changes to TIF legislation occurred.
OPPOSE: Changes to the current sales tax situs law on motor vehicles.	No changes to the tax situs law occurred.
OPPOSE: Tax policy changes that simply shift the tax burden to business and local levels of government.	Sen. Sub of HB 2360 provides for an increase in sales tax of 1 cent for the next three years.
SUPPORT: Enforcement of the tax law requiring fair market valuation of property taxes throughout the state.	No changes occurred.
SUPPORT: Regulatory framework which results in consistent and predictable application of state policies, procedures and regulations.	No changes occurred.
SUPPORT: Current state of Kansas status as a right to work state.	No changes occurred.
SUPPORT: The retention of all current exceptions to the Kansas Open Records Act, which protect the confidentiality rights and interests of private business.	SB 369 amended the KORA to provide that a public agency is not required to disclose an individual’s email address or cell phone number which has been given to the agency for purposes of receiving notification of communications from the agency which are intended for wide distribution to the public.
SUPPORT: Full implementation of 2007 phased repeal of the state’s franchise tax.	No changes occurred. This issue was debated but ultimately allowed to remain in its current state.
OPPOSE: Binding arbitration in employment disputes.	No changes occurred.
OPPOSE: Initiative and referendum.	No changes occurred.
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.	No changes occurred.