

LEAWOOD CHAMBER

2012 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Leawood Chamber encourages the State to handle its financial affairs like a business would, looking for ways to streamline operations to reduce the cost of providing services and to exercise fiscal responsibility. It is critical that the State carefully consider policy actions it takes, recognizing that businesses function best in an environment of legislative stability and predictability. Following are the business objectives (not presented in priority order) on which the Chamber has taken positions for the 2012 Kansas session.

Invest in and Modernize Programs that Promote Economic Development

Promote a Competitive Business & Tax Climate in Kansas

In general, all policies should help control or reduce the cost of doing business in Kansas, while maintaining an environment of legislative stability and predictability. The following items are areas of particular interest to the Chamber:

- Oppose sales tax on services
- Implement a fair and reasonable approach to return the state's unemployment fund to solvency
- Reinforce the integrity of the workers compensation system with careful attention to rules that create waste in the costs of the system for employers
- Ensure an impartial and cost-effective legal system
- Maintain fair and responsible tax policies for businesses that acknowledge the economic realities of the competitive environment in which Johnson County businesses operate.
- Oppose actions by State government that merely shift tax burdens from State government to businesses or other units of government
- Oppose the imposition of constitutional or statutory state or local tax/spending lids and "supermajority" 2/3 voting requirements to approve state or local tax increases. Arbitrary limitations such as this inhibit government's ability to manage its financial affairs and perform governmental functions in a timely and efficient manner

Modernize & Continue State Economic Development Programs

- Maintain diverse, flexible, predictable and competitive State and local economic development tools that can address a variety of job and investment opportunities.
- Maintain, and to the extent appropriate, modernize, State and local economic development tools for large and small businesses to continue to be competitive and create new jobs, including the addition of more valued cash-based incentives.
- Assure that currently authorized economic development programs are properly funded
- Support initiatives that promote more effective work-force development.

Continue to Invest in Life Sciences

Support policies for funding and continued development of the area of Life Sciences that promotes the public health and welfare of our citizens, including but not limited to:

- Kansas Bioscience Authority
- Achieving NCIS designation for KU Medical Center
- Animal Health Corridor

Transportation

A well planned transportation system is crucial for the economic vitality of our State.

- The Leawood Chamber supports the full preservation of the Kansas State Highway Fund and opposes the diversion of dedicated state highway funds for any use other than the funding of the eligible transportation projects for which it was created, while maintaining flexibility, accountability, and opportunities for local input and support.

Provide Appropriate Mechanisms for the Adequate Funding of Public Education

Because appropriate funding for quality public education is a critical investment in economic development, the Leawood Chamber supports:

- Fundamental reform of the K-12 school finance formula. Any new funding formula developed should allow local school districts greater authority and flexibility over how funds are raised and spent for education and not create burdensome additional tax burdens for local taxpayers.
- Maintain investment in higher education to preserve affordability and produce a well trained workforce.
- Innovative programs that develop a workforce with strong math, science, engineering and technology skills.

Promote Fair Competition & Limited Government Regulation in the Marketplace

When a marketplace is governed effectively by market dynamics, government should seek to minimize regulatory burdens. Government policy should ultimately seek to empower customers, not regulators. Accordingly, government should refrain, to the maximum extent possible, from regulating the marketplace so as to promote fair competition and stimulate investment in an atmosphere of regulatory predictability.

Health Care

The Chamber supports fair and reasonable implementation of health care initiatives that will protect fair and reasonable physician and hospital reimbursements and will also assure the availability of health care services.

Develop a Comprehensive, Incentive-based, Energy Program

Clean, reliable and affordable energy is a major concern for Kansas. The Leawood Chamber supports development of a diverse, long-term energy plan that responsibly balances environmental goals with ample statewide power and reasonable costs, including incentive-based measures that promote investment in energy efficiency, alternative technologies, and new infrastructure rather than imposing mandates, caps or penalties.

Immigration

The Leawood Chamber supports a balanced immigration policy created and enforced at the federal level. The Council opposes State action that creates additional costly or time-consuming mandates for employers or that imposes unreasonable penalties on employers who unintentionally hire undocumented workers.



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