

2017 Johnson County Public Policy Council Kansas State Legislative Platform

The Johnson County Public Policy Council was created to speak as one unified voice on behalf of 10 local chambers of commerce and the more than 5,000 Johnson County businesses they collectively represent.

The following are issues of importance to the business community in Johnson County, listed in no priority order.

ENCOURAGE A STABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE

The Council encourages an environment of legislative stability and predictability allowing businesses to effectively plan for future growth and expansion.

TAX POLICY

The Council supports a balanced tax structure, including tax reform and exemption measures, in which all income earners pay a reasonable tax rate and that acknowledges the economic realities of the unique competitive environment in which Johnson County businesses operate, including maintaining the sales tax exclusion for professional services.

ENHANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION EFFORTS

The Council strongly encourages and would support collaboration among statewide organizations and educational institutions to create a comprehensive and coordinated statewide plan to facilitate and enhance economic development and job growth. Basic tenets of the plan should include:

- Maintaining diverse, flexible, predictable, and competitive state and local economic development tools that can address a variety of job and investment opportunities.
- Assuring that currently authorized economic development programs are properly funded and marketed.
- Initiatives that promote more effective workplace development.

EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Because appropriate funding for quality public education is an important investment in economic development, the Council supports:

- Developing a new school finance formula that maximizes resources to provide adequate funding which affords substantially the same opportunity for all Kansas students to achieve well-defined educational outcomes
- Expanding local funding flexibility and control over how education funds are raised and spent.
- Maintaining competitive investment in public higher education to preserve affordability and produce a well-trained workforce.
- Policies, programs, and adequate funding that encourage the development of a robust public education system emphasizing a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum that fosters a well-trained, productive, globally competitive workforce.

REDUCE KEY BUSINESS COSTS

To enhance the state's business climate and encourage economic development, the Council supports measures that would help control or reduce key business costs, including:

- Preserving key sales tax exemptions impacting business.
- Ensuring businesses and their employees have reasonable access to affordable healthcare coverage options.
- Continue monitoring the administration of the Employment Security Trust Fund to ensure that the implementation of the revised employer rate structure provides Fund solvency and fairly assesses Kansas employers based on their utilization of the system.
- Maintaining the integrity and affordability of the worker's compensation system, monitoring court interpretation of recent reforms to assure intent of reforms are upheld.
- Protecting market-driven employer/ employee relationships and opposing mandates.
- Promoting a legal system that protects a stable pro-business climate.

SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF LOCAL CONTROL

The cornerstone of municipal government and public education is the belief that governance should be as close to the people as possible. The Council strongly supports the preservation of local control whereby local elected officials have the authority of local elections, including determination of partisanship, and are accountable for the funding, regulation and provision of services to meet the needs of communities they serve.

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OPPOSE TAX OR SPENDING LIDS ON STATE/LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

To ensure our elected representatives' ability to govern effectively, the Council opposes the imposition of constitutional or statutory state or local tax/spending lids, supermajority approval requirements, or unreasonably burdensome mandates in reporting and approving tax or budget measures including the mandated public vote on budget utilization of increased property tax collections. The Council supports additional exemptions from application of the mandated public vote on use of increased property tax revenue for the cost of infrastructure (maintenance, enhancement and new construction) and for costs incurred in providing mental health services.

OPPOSE INITIATIVE & REFERENDUM

The Council opposes initiative and referendum provisions in Kansas, which would allow a relatively small number of petitioners to force costly public elections on state or local issues.

TRANSPORTATION

The Council supports continuing, innovative and effective investment in transportation infrastructure, including preservation of direct revenue transfers to the State Highway Fund, and opposes the diversion of dedicated SHF monies 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.

IMMIGRATION

The Council believes immigration policy should be created and enforced at the federal level and opposes state action that creates additional costly or time-consuming mandates for employers or imposes unreasonable penalties on employers who unintentionally hire or assist undocumented workers.

JUDICIAL SELECTION

The Council supports nonpartisan and nonelection process for the selection of high quality judges.

2017 Johnson County Public Policy Council

DeSoto Chamber of Commerce
913.583.1585

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
816.221.2424

Leawood Chamber of Commerce
913.498.1514

Lenexa Chamber of Commerce
913.888.1414

Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce
913.262.2141

Olathe Chamber of Commerce
913.764.1050

Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
913.491.3600

Shawnee Chamber of Commerce
913.631.6545

Southwest Johnson County Chamber of Commerce
913.856.6464

Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce
913.592.3893