



## **Olathe Chamber 2021 State Legislative Platform**

**The Olathe Chamber of Commerce continues to be the voice of business that advances the economic well-being and quality of life in Olathe.**

**PANDEMIC RELIEF:** In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Olathe Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages state policies that help businesses safely stay open, pay employees, and avoid additional layoffs while creating policies that assist with the recovery of the state's economy. Specifically, the chamber is committed to working with elected officials to access stimulus incentives, adequate capitol, tax forgiveness, replenishing the unemployment trust fund, and reduction in regulations affording Kansas businesses the opportunity to recover quickly from the pandemic and get back to business.

**BUDGET & TAXES:** Our vision is to achieve a balanced tax base while continuing to fund our most important economic development assets.

- Develop a consistent and predictable tax code to allow businesses to plan more effectively and operate more efficiently as well as remain competitive with surrounding states. Specifically, oppose the implementation of new sales tax on services or increase on food.
- Maintain a reasonable sales tax collection system that does not unduly burden Kansas retailers or put them at a disadvantage with out-of-state retailers.
- Preserve and expand state and local economic development tools to bring additional revenue to the state by attracting new companies and creating new jobs.
- Support continued funding of the states' infrastructure and core services, including the state comprehensive transportation plan.
- Repeal 2015 tax lid imposed or support targeted exemptions to provide relief from the tax lid on local government as it impedes the ability of the City of Olathe and other business partners to provide and maintain infrastructure necessary to support growth.

**EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** We believe the future success of Kansas business depends on continued investment in educational excellence and workforce development.

- Support measures to strengthen the Department of Commerce and enhance the state's ability to compete in the global economy and facilitate job growth, including the adoption of a statewide long-term economic growth strategic plan.
- Assure economic development programs are properly funded and the Economic Development Initiative Fund (EDIF) is focused on economic development purposes.
- Continue competitive funding for K-12 education at levels that fund and promote excellence in education while addressing costs associated with growth, diversity, operational and capital costs.
- Develop and utilize a school finance formula that maximizes resources, increases flexibility and expands local control over raising and spending funds for education.
- Invest and support innovative programs in higher education and research to preserve affordability and produce a well-trained workforce.
- Advocate for workforce development, technical training, and higher education initiatives, especially in the fields of technology, engineering, math, science and healthcare as well as the removal of barriers for career and workforce training exploration.

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND WORKERS COMPENSATION: We support measures that allow employers to create jobs and are dedicated to getting workers back on the job.**

- Monitor the administration of the Kansas Unemployment Compensation System to assure there are no overpayments or unqualified benefits paid; neutral and fair interpretation of the unemployment insurance laws and ensure the employer rate structure provides Fund solvency and fair assessments on Kansas employers based on their utilization of the system.
- Monitor Workers' Compensation costs while maintaining reasonable reimbursement for providers and monitor court interpretation of recent reforms to assure intent of reforms are upheld.

**HEALTH CARE: We advocate for a health care system that is fair and affordable for both employers and individuals.**

- Address the cost shifts of uninsured Kansans being passed on to businesses and other consumers by supporting health care solutions that improve the quality and efficiency of the KanCare/Medicaid system while expanding coverage available through state and federal funding that is fiscally responsible.
- Monitor healthcare reforms and support innovative incentives and enhanced delivery systems that allow more employers to offer affordable health benefits to their employees such as Association Health Plans.
- Support health reforms for all businesses, making health care more affordable.
- Maintain sufficient funding and adequate reimbursement rates for Medicaid providers despite state budget challenges, including restoration of recent cuts to Kansas providers.

**IMMIGRATION: Our vision includes immigration measures that protect employers.**

- Monitor immigration reform measures, their impact on businesses and the costs to cities and counties to enforce.
- Oppose measures that impose burdensome mandates or penalties on Kansas businesses, such as revocation of business licenses or required use of E-verify.

### **STANDING POSITIONS OF THE OLATHE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Olathe Chamber has developed the following standing positions, which are reviewed annually for their continued merit and reflect the general will of the Chamber.

#### **THE CHAMBER SUPPORTS:**

- Policies which keep Kansas competitive with surrounding states.
- Retention of the constitutional power of eminent domain with local control.
- Current sales tax situs law on motor vehicles.
- Efforts to reform the tort system to decrease the cost of doing business in Kansas.
- Monitoring state-wide energy policy changes related to the EPA's Clean Power Plan rule which could cause increased energy costs.
- Efforts to coordinate a strategic, modernized approach to travel and tourism with professional leadership, including initiatives appropriate to travel and tourism-related entities and proper use of transient guest tax.
- Optimizing state funding for Medicaid home and community-based waivers for vulnerable populations (elderly, development, physical and mental disabilities) to receive Federal Medicaid match.
- Limiting the role of politics in the selection of judges so there is an impartial judiciary branch of government.
- Efforts to improve workforce mobility through sufficient funding in public transportation.

#### **THE CHAMBER OPPOSES:**

- Restrictions on tax abatements.
- School vouchers.
- Tax policies that shift the tax burden to other areas of state government or to other levels of government, including municipal government.
- Legislation that weakens the current Open Records/Open Meetings statutes.
- Unfunded or under-funded mandates.
- Binding arbitration in employment disputes.
- Restriction on cities ability to utilize unilateral annexation.
- Initiative and referendum.
- Prohibition on public lobbying.

- Burdensome reporting requirements of nonprofit expenditures which put Kansas economic developers at a competitive disadvantage.
- The taking of dedicated transportation funding and using it for other purposes.