

2023 Johnson County Public Policy Council State Legislative Platform

The Johnson County Public Policy Council was created to speak as one unified voice on behalf of ten 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.

Reasonable and Balanced Tax Policy

The Council supports a reasonable and balanced tax structure that acknowledges the economic realities of the unique bistate environment in which Johnson County businesses operate, including equitable property tax relief and retaining the sales tax exclusion for professional services and other sales tax exemptions critical to maintaining business competitiveness.

Economic Development and Job Creation Efforts

The Council supports enhancing the state's ability to compete in the global economy for job growth and business investment, including:

- Investing adequate resources to ensure robust Department of Commerce staff, marketing, and programs;
- Maintaining effective and competitive state and local economic development tools that address a variety of job and investment opportunities; and
- Assuring that economic development programs are properly funded and marketed, and the Economic Development Initiatives Fund is focused on economic development purposes.

Workforce

Recognizing that workforce issues continue to be a major priority for businesses from all sectors, the Council supports promoting initiatives that produce responsive workforce development while minimizing burdensome requirements that increase employer costs.

Excellence in Public Education

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

- Maintaining stable and adequate K-12 public education funding that:
 - Enables students to achieve post-secondary success and workforce-readiness;
 - Does not unreasonably burden Kansas businesses or adversely impact other core state services or the economic development climate;
 - Fosters a well-trained, productive, globally competitive workforce; and
 - Promotes career and workforce training exploration.
- Preserving competitive investment in public post-secondary education to improve affordability and produce a well-trained workforce, including technical training and certifications.

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:

- Ensuring businesses and their employees have reasonable access to affordable healthcare coverage.
- Implementing fiscally responsible healthcare solutions that expand coverage and improve the quality and efficiency of the KanCare/Medicaid system to minimize cost shifts of uninsured Kansans being passed on to businesses.
- Assuring the Kansas Employment Security Trust Fund’s modernization project is effectively implemented and mechanisms are in place to protect the solvency and integrity of the Fund.
- Maintaining the integrity and affordability of the workers compensation system.
- Preserving market-driven employer/employee relationships such as hiring, compensating and terminating employees.
- Promoting a legal system that protects a stable pro-business climate.

Stable Business Climate

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

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 are accountable for the funding, regulation and provision of services to meet the needs of the communities they serve and retain authority over local elections, including determination of partisanship.

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.

Transportation Infrastructure

The Council supports full funding of the statewide multi-modal transportation infrastructure program, including preservation of direct revenue transfers to the State Highway Fund (SHF), and opposes diversion of dedicated SHF monies for any use other than the funding of eligible transportation projects for which they are intended, while maintaining flexibility, accountability, and opportunities for local input and support.

Energy

Support a market-driven comprehensive state energy policy with a balanced and diversified portfolio of energy services and technologies.

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 a nonpartisan and nonelection process that facilitates the selection of high-quality judges.