

2021 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.

Facilitate Pandemic Relief and Recovery

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council supports consideration of state policies that help businesses stay open, pay employees, avoid additional layoffs, and assist with the recovery of the state's economy including:

- Working with elected officials to access stimulus incentives;
- Facilitating adequate capital;
- Providing tax forgiveness;
- Extending business liability protections;
- Replenishing the Kansas Employment Security Trust Fund;
- Reducing regulations; and
- Expanding access to technology.

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.

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 maintaining the sales tax exclusion for professional services and other sales tax exemptions critical to maintaining business competitiveness. The council also supports maintaining a reasonable sales tax collection system, including leveling the playing field with remote sellers and third-party marketplace administrators doing business in Kansas.

Enhance Economic Development and Job Creation Efforts

The Council supports measures to strengthen the Department of Commerce and enhance the state's ability to compete in the global economy for job growth and business investment, including the following priorities:

- Maintaining effective and competitive state and local economic development tools that address a variety of job and investment opportunities;
- Assuring that economic development programs are properly funded and marketed, and the Economic Development Initiatives Fund is focused on economic development purposes; and
- Promoting initiatives that produce more effective workforce development.

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
 - Removes barriers for career and workforce training exploration.
- Preserving competitive investment in public post-secondary education to improve affordability and produce a well-trained workforce, including technology training and certifications.

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:

- Ensuring businesses and their employees have reasonable access to affordable healthcare coverage options;
- Monitoring the administration of the Kansas Employment Security Trust Fund to assure there are no overpayments or unqualified benefits paid, apply 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;
- Maintaining the integrity and affordability of the workers compensation system;
- Preserving market-driven employer/employee relationships and opposing mandates; and
- Promoting a legal system that protects a stable pro-business climate.

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

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 use of increased local property tax collections.

Invest in 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 any

further 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.

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.