

Moving Forward Together!



2023 Joint Legislative Statement for the Emporia & Lyon County Area

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Safe, Diverse and Inclusive Communities

Emporia and Lyon County support safety and inclusion for all. The population of our communities is diverse, and we celebrate those differences.

Tax Policy

Emporia and Lyon County residents recognize the importance of a balanced and fair tax policy for our State. Tax policy can drive job growth and recruit new businesses by building excellent infrastructure, providing high quality education, and enhancing the health and quality of life for our citizens.

Education

Education is essential to the vitality and dynamism of the Emporia – Lyon County community. To ensure equity, every public-school student in Kansas deserves an opportunity to a high-quality education preparing them to be college and career ready. We support the requests of the Kansas Board of Regents to restore funding for public universities, community colleges, and technical colleges to pre-pandemic levels.

For Pre-K to 12: We ask the Kansas Legislature to:

- Fully fund the school finance formula, including CPI; 3-year commitment to Education funding so that districts can be judicious in financial planning. This also supports economic development.
- Fully fund Early Childhood and Special Education to 92 percent of the excess costs.
- Maintain sustainable funding for KPERS.
 - ♦ Increase benefits to Tier 3 employees to help retain current employees.
 - ♦ Due to staff shortages, allow work after retirement.

For Higher Education: We ask the Kansas Legislature to:

- Continue to support the Excel in CTE Funding to support technical education in the region.

- Support extending the one-time Capital Outlay increase to technical colleges to respond to infrastructure and facility maintenance needs.
- Support the Kansas Association of Technical Colleges request for a base grant to support technical education operational needs.
- Consider expansion of deferred maintenance funds to the 2-year college sector.
- Invest in “Building a Talent Pipeline” initiative that will support improved outcomes for the State’s college going rate, student retention, and graduate rates, as well as assist with recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff.
 - ♦ Implementation of the National Institute of Student Success Academic Playbooks to Improve Student Outcomes.
 - ♦ Support of the universities’ Strategic Enrollment Management and student recruitment initiatives.
 - ♦ Support funding for targeted programs that help keep students in Kansas through internships or similar programs.
- Expansion of the Regents’ Distinguished Faculty to recruit and retain faculty and staff.
- Protect the State’s investment in state universities’ operations by increasing base operating support to protect against inflation.
- Continue the State’s investment in cybersecurity and information technology infrastructure.
- Continue the State’s investment in the Board of Regents’ capital renewal initiative, including allocation of funds specifically for the demolition of obsolete facilities.
- Invest in ESU programmatic initiatives that will attract and retain students including:
 - ♦ SMaRT Kansas 21: Science and Math Recruitment of Teachers in Kansas for the 21st Century.
 - ♦ Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach Center programming.
 - ♦ Creation of a Cybersecurity Center (academic programming).



Economic Development

The most pressing issue facing our business and industry is the difficulty recruiting and retaining employees. The state must become a partner in assisting our communities to address issues such as affordable housing and childcare. Both are critical for the recruitment and retention of employees and for the growth of our business and industry.

We ask the Kansas Legislature to:

- Fully fund and implement incentive programs such as PEAK, HPIP, CDBG, STAR, ROZ, and JCF which are critical to the recruitment of new and expansion of existing businesses.
- Support the Kansas Department of Commerce efforts to push forward with implementation of the Kansas Framework for Growth. The plan's focus on regional industry sectors reflects important geographic differences, changing demographics, and economic trends.
- Create targeted incentive policies that reward new job creation, higher wages, and capital investment tied to local performance standards that are identified in the Kansas Framework for Growth.
- Continue funding for small business development and entrepreneurship programs like Network Kansas, Kansas Manufacturing Solutions, and the Small Business Development Centers.
- Support the federal Small Business Innovation Research program as a major source of early state business capital. This is key to support small and microbusinesses that are critical to the Kansas economy.
- Support local control over the use of TIF, CID, TDD, IRB, and tax abatements which require detailed knowledge about the local economic climate and tax environment.
- Continue efforts to review regulations that outline application processes, eligibility requirements, and fees for economic development programs. Streamlining program requirements and lowering fees creates a more level playing field for Kansas businesses of all sizes.
- Create programs that focus on work-ready skill training and removing barriers to employment as outline in Kansas Chamber's The Challenge to Compete – Kansas Workforce 2020 report
- Create policies that allow more companies to qualify for the Kansas Child Day Care Assistance Credit.
- Support providing benefits to employers offering workplace childcare assistance and increasing qualifying activities.
- Create a property tax exemption for all in-home and center-based licensed childcare facilities.
- Support creation of a Child Care Business Incentive Grant and Child Care Challenge Funding like the ones offered in the State of Iowa.
- Develop funding for training initiatives focused on improving remote worker skills.
- Support the creation of incentives that encourage Kansas businesses to hire in-state remote workers.
- Support efforts to expand broadband throughout the state utilizing the Office of Broadband Development within the Kansas Department of Commerce as a clearinghouse to leverage opportunities and facilitate conversations between service providers and users.
- Support reinstating the Sales Tax Project Exemption benefit to encourage capital investment and new construction instead of having a company undergo an IRB issuance simply to become eligible for the sales tax exemption.
- We support the creation of a State low interest revolving loan fund to finance development in Rural Housing Incentive Districts and the creation of legislation that results in increased housing statewide based on the 2021 statewide housing study.

Health Care

High quality, affordable health care is essential for a thriving and healthy community. We support primary and specialty care, behavioral health, dental care, public health and various wellness initiatives that ensure sufficient funding for providers.

We ask the Kansas Legislature to:

- Support a continuation of Medicaid to allow telemedicine parity for treatment by telephone and televideo with equivalent reimbursement as an office visit in both Rural Health Clinic and non-Rural Health Clinic settings.
- Support Medicaid Expansion to maximize available federal funding.
- Support Medicaid to allow Community Health Worker Program services with equivalent reimbursement as an office visit in both Rural Health Clinic and Non-Rural Health Clinic settings.
- Fund rural recruitment efforts and incentives in the health care industries to assist in retaining and keeping a quality workforce. (Ex. 79-32,267. Tax credit for certain taxpayers domiciled in a rural opportunity zone, Student Loan Repayment Assistance.)
- Restore state psychiatric inpatient capacity.
- Protect 340B program that affords health centers and other safety net providers the ability to purchase pharmaceuticals at deep discounts. Health Centers use these savings to expand access to needed healthcare services, whether through passing along discounts to patients, investing in new equipment and services delivered by staff – such as care coordinators, whose activities are essential, but typically not reimbursed by insurers or other payors.



Transportation

We support fully funding the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation program and will work as a partner in our regional projects. Lyon County has 301 bridges, ranking 2nd in the state. Current major transportation projects include major improvements at the Emporia Municipal Airport and construction of transcontinental double tracks by BNSF. The expansion of broadband into our rural areas is also vital to the growth and prosperity of our citizens.

We ask the Kansas Legislature to:

- Fund the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program (IKE) that provides a responsive framework for the state's future through a holistic approach that includes economic development and broadband expansion as primary factors for consideration.
- Participate in the expansion of broadband into our rural areas.

