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2025 Governmental Affairs Committee

Tim Rhodes, GAC Chair | Country Club Bank

Ann Smith-Tate, President & CEO | Shawnee Chamber

Natalie Bright, Contract Lobbyist | Bright & Carpenter



GOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS

A Program of the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce

2025
State Legislative
Agenda



15100 West 67th Street | Suite 202
Shawnee, KS 66217

913.631.6545
shawneeschamber.com

Business & Economic Development

To continue to facilitate a strong and diverse economy, the Shawnee Chamber supports business and economic development legislation that promotes greater stability for the business climate and creates certainty for job growth and business expansion. The Shawnee Chamber Supports:

- Continued development of initiatives aimed at increasing entrepreneurial ventures and incentives for small businesses including assistance in job creation.
- Legislation that provides discretionary authority to state and local economic development agencies in utilizing economic incentive tools.
- Preserving economic development incentives that better the business community and drive innovative investments.
- Reducing administrative burdens for small businesses applying for state and local economic development incentives and tax credits.
- Limitations on non-economic damages or other litigation reforms necessary to maintain or lower the costs of doing business in the state.
- Utilization of the sales tax exemption on capital investments.
- Restoration of 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 implementation of a long-term economic growth strategic plan.

Public Education & Workforce Development

Education excellence is one of the most important factors to stimulate economic prosperity and growth in the state of Kansas. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- A public-school finance formula that is financially sustainable with greater local funding flexibility to support educational excellence and meets community growth.
- Redistribution of state funding to provide increased support for those districts that have unfunded excess special education costs.
- Sufficient funding for higher education to keep Kansas institutions competitive and fiscally sound.
- Education and workforce development initiatives that foster a well-trained, productive, globally competitive workforce with an increased emphasis on Pre-K-12 students’ career success and workforce readiness.
- Increased funding for skilled trade schools, technical training and incentives for apprenticeships.
- Addressing barriers to work including access to childcare, attainable housing and reliable transportation.

Health Care

A health care system that is accessible and affordable for both employers and individuals is critical for the State’s competitiveness in recruiting both business and talent. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- Addressing 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 which is fiscally responsible.
- Opposing health insurance mandates which unnecessarily increase the costs of health insurance.
- Healthcare reforms and innovative incentives that enhance the employer-based health insurance delivery systems such as Association Health Plans.
- Support health care access including Mental Health investments and expansion and permanency of telehealth.

Tax Policy

State government should provide a reasonable and balanced tax policy that maintains adequate funding levels for government while protecting the interests of our business members. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- Not assessing sales tax on services not currently taxed.
- Preserving tax exemptions on nonprofit organizations.
- Protection of dedicated funds flowing to the local level of government.
- Appraisals based on fair-market value as currently defined in Kansas statute and oppose caps in property valuations as unconstitutional and inequitable.
- A retail sales tax allowance for Kansas retailers collecting taxes on behalf of state and local government.

Oppose Tax or Spending Lids on State/Local Governments

Funding discretion and flexibility are key components of effective local fiscal management, and local officials are best situated to respond to growth or decline in a timely manner and make necessary investments in the future of their communities. We strongly oppose any state-imposed limits on taxing and spending authority of local government. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- Locally elected officials making budget and tax decisions that are most reflective of the community’s need, financial interests and more responsive to the local taxpayers.

Infrastructure

The Chamber recognizes the importance of basic infrastructure to economic health, job growth, public safety, and overall quality of life. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- Full funding of the state multi-modal transportation plan.
- Preservation of direct revenue transfers to the State Highway Fund and opposes diversion of the funds and supports preserving current local rations for any use other than funding for eligible transportation projects for which it was created.
- The state considering diverse revenue strategies that maintains flexibility, accountability and opportunities for local input and support.
- Statewide access to broadband.
- KDOT’s K-7 Corridor Plan, particularly the intersections of K-7 and 75th Street and K-7 and 43rd Street and encourage the City to cost share in capital project costs.

Energy & Environment

The Chamber supports a comprehensive energy policy with a balanced and diversified portfolio of energy sources and technologies. The Shawnee Chamber supports:

- Long-term energy plans that ensure ample power and reliability for the region, balancing environmental and cost benefits, without shifting costs between customers.
- Consumer driven policies that promote cost-effective investment in energy efficiency, sustainability, transmission and distribution and voluntary use of alternative and renewable fuels and energy resources.
- Regulatory models and policies that promote the region's history of affordable and reliable energy.

Shawnee Chamber of Commerce

2025 STANDING POSITIONS

The Chamber’s standing positions, which may or may not come up during any given legislative session, are as follows (positions are not presented in priority order):

SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

-  Maintaining diverse, flexible, predictable, and competitive state economic development tools that can address a variety of job and investment opportunities and needs.
-  Current State of Kansas status as a right-to-work state.
-  Immigration is a federal issue; thus, we oppose 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.
-  Protection of locally controlled incentive tools (IRB, TIF, CID, NRA) for economic growth and development.
-  Current laws regarding exemptions to the Kansas Open Records Act, including restricting Open Records Act coverage to only governmental agencies.
-  Efforts that fund the marketing and promotion of tourism in the state.
-  Maintain existing, non-partisan and non-election process for the selection of high-quality judges.

OPPOSE THE FOLLOWING:

-  Changes to the current sales tax situs law on motor vehicles.
-  Binding arbitration in employment disputes.
-  Policies which may be perceived to make Kansas unwelcoming to all visitors.