



**Overland  
Park  
Chamber™**



# 2020 Federal Public Policy Platform

**T**he Overland Park Chamber of Commerce encourages diligent, selfless and bipartisan service to address the issues facing the United States in a proficient, timely and transparent manner. The Chamber supports reasonable, fact-based free-market efforts and solutions for improving our local, regional and national safety, economic vitality, and quality of life. When a problem arises that the market cannot adequately address, the Chamber supports developing reasonable, fact-based legislative and regulatory solutions that are developed in partnership with government and business. These solutions should reward outcomes and compliance and treat all companies and business categories in a fair, equitable and predictable manner. The Chamber encourages cooperation between all levels of government in order to provide more efficient delivery of services while maximizing the return on investment for taxpayers.



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## DECENNIAL CENSUS

The Chamber emphasizes the need for a fair, accurate and complete census and supports adequate funding for the Decennial Census.

The Chamber supports:

- The nomination and CONFIRMATION of a nonpartisan, qualified Census Director

## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber supports policies and programs, and adequate funding thereof, that encourage the development of a robust P-20 public education system emphasizing a rigorous science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum based on globally competitive standards. These programs should prepare students to succeed in the 21st century workforce through an innovative curriculum and practical hands-on experiences to enhance success in pursuit of post-secondary education or employment in a skilled trade.

### P-20 Public Education System

The Chamber supports:

- Increased funding for Graduate Medical Education in response to the shortage of physicians (especially in primary care).
- Increased investment in high-quality early childhood learning and development and child care programs that integrate early learning with K-12 education and are available to all children.
- Funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act at the authorized 40% level so that local school districts do not have to divert other education funding streams to make up the current funding gap.
- Invest funding in policies and programs that promote workforce development, not only current needs but also including focus on identifying the education, training and skills needed as we continue to move into the 21st century.
- Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.
- Policies and programs that promote access to and affordability of higher education, such as student loans and grants and similar student financial aid programs.
- The identification and implementation of policies and programs to address the shortage of STEM credentialed teachers, where a lack of competitiveness with the business sector together with increasing numbers of teacher retirements make this an area of critical need.
- Continued state regulation and oversight of charter schools.
- Continued and enhanced investment in veterans' education benefits.

The Chamber opposes:

- The Chamber opposes cuts to Medicaid funding to public schools that pay for services and equipment provided to special education students, including school-based screening and treatment for students from low-income families.
- The Chamber opposes the use of public tax funds to subsidize private education.

## ENERGY

The Chamber supports a comprehensive national energy policy that is innovative and economical. Policy should encourage energy efficiency and conservation, sustainability, and security, and it must also support the diverse energy portfolio of our region.

The Chamber supports:

- Energy policy that considers all forms of available energy including natural gas, coal, nuclear, hydro, wind, solar and

biofuels in order to meet growing demand.

- Energy policy that supports energy independence and efficiencies in production and usage, including reasonable expansion of domestic oil and gas exploration.
- Energy policy that would not unduly raise energy costs.
- Energy policy that encourages a diversified, sustainable energy supply and surplus.
- Upgrades and expansion of our national transmission and distribution infrastructure.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Chamber supports legislation that fosters entrepreneurship, innovation and job creation

The Chamber supports:

- Legislation that makes changes to the federal regulatory process to lessen government burdens on job-creators;
- Legislation that modifies the tax code to encourage investment in new businesses;
- Legislation that seeks to accelerate the commercialization of university research that can lead to new ventures; and
- Legislation that provides new opportunities for highly-educated and entrepreneurial immigrants to stay in the United States where their talent and new ideas can fuel economic growth and create American jobs
- Legislation supporting enhanced opportunities for veterans to utilize services and programs of the Small Business Administration as they pursue private sector employment opportunities

## ENVIRONMENT

The Chamber supports a system of environmental standards that provides a balance between ensuring the sustainability of natural resources while ensuring enhanced quality of life and economic growth in the region. Environmental policy should be based on sound scientific data relying on tested and proven human health impacts.

### Air Quality

The Chamber supports:

- Federal air quality legislation that does not cause economic burden on industry and American job loss and ensures public health protection.

### Emissions Standards

The Chamber supports:

- Balanced and reasonable national environmental change policies that are equitable to all regions and industries, encourage innovation and economic growth, and achieve sustainable environmental benefits.
- Legislation that would encourage the accelerated development and deployment of greenhouse gas reduction technology and the reduction of barriers to the development of climate-friendly energy sources.

The Chamber opposes:

- Policies that would raise energy costs for businesses in ways that jeopardize job creation.
- Carbon regulation aimed at impacting climate change should not be addressed and cannot be solved by state or regional approaches.

### Water Quality

The Chamber supports:

- Efforts by local, state, and federal government for sound

watershed management through the application of reasonable standards and educational resources.

- The EPA rescinding or modifying the current version of the Waters of the US (WOTUS) rule that is overreaching in its application to streams and other small domestic bodies of water making it particularly harmful to agriculturally prominent states such as Kansas. The scope of the WOTUS rule should be returned to that which existed prior to 2015 (i.e., navigable waters), and the definitions should be clearly stated and universally applied, thereby protecting US drinking water while at the same time providing reasonable regulation and certainty to the states.
- The Wet Weather Community Sustainability Act which offers both a technology-based and water quality-based approach to help municipalities manage peak wet weather events in a cost-effective manner that is protective of the environment and public health and consistent with Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements.

## GOVERNMENTAL/FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The Chamber supports fiscal policy that stimulates economic growth through careful and comprehensive evaluation of spending coupled with sound revenue strategies.

The Chamber supports:

- A balanced federal budget.
- “Zero-based budgeting”
- A reduced national debt that promotes the health of our national economy today and for future generations
- Timely federal budgets together with all associated appropriations
- Fiscal policies that stimulate economic growth through careful and comprehensive evaluation of domestic and foreign spending
- Modification of maintenance of effort requirements in ways that ensure federal grants and cost sharing funds are spent for the purposes intended but do not otherwise impinge upon state and local elected officials’ ability to appropriate funds or set policy.
- Enactment of longer-term legislation, especially regarding regularly recurring issues, such as debt ceiling and budgets (with corresponding appropriations), to provide stability and predictability

The Chamber opposes:

- Last-minute, short-term fixes and gimmicks in response to legislative and budgetary challenges

## HEALTH CARE

The Chamber supports an accessible, affordable health and high-quality care delivery system that balances the needs of consumers with demands placed on employers and taxpayers to provide adequate insurance coverage to all citizens.

The Chamber supports:

- Repeal or modification of the ACA, with a contemporaneous effective date, if such action provides a comprehensive replacement policy that includes or provides, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Reconsideration and reformulation of the most onerous provisions of the ACA that adversely affect business, including the employer mandate and the new taxes that will result in higher premiums passed on to employers and employees, including, without limitation.
  - Repeal of the 40% excise tax on high-cost employer health plans (Cadillac Tax) now scheduled to take effect in 2022.

- Repeal of the Medical Device Tax to take effect on January 1, 2020.
- Repeal of the Health Insurance Tax levied on health insurance providers based on premiums written, which disproportionately impacts small businesses.
- Repeal of the employer mandate, assessing penalties on larger employers (50+ employees) that do not provide minimum value and affordable coverage to employees.
- Return the requirement to be considered a full-time employee from the ACA’s 30-hours/week definition to the historical 40-hours/week.
- Provide appropriate levels of funding from the federal government to cover the cost of providing health care services (including home and community-based services) through Medicare, Medicaid and other such governmental programs.
- Extension of full federal funding for three years (from the date of adoption or approval of a state’s waiver request) for new state adoptions of Medicaid expansion programs.
- Reasonable, evidence-based governmental requirements and or mandates, with corresponding funding provided, to participate in the expansion of quality improvement, information technology and transparency initiatives.
- Appropriate level of support and funding for safety net clinics and other access points to encourage health care provisions at the most efficient and least costly stage.
- Protection of tax incentives and non-tax status for those providers documenting community benefit through various activities including, but not limited to, charity care.
- Programs that promote a greater emphasis on personal responsibility, healthy lifestyles and the resulting private and governmental program incentives and supports.
- Incentives for businesses to provide health insurance for employees.
- Incentives for individuals to purchase health insurance. Investigate collaborative efforts with states to provide high risk pools for individuals and employers to obtain health care coverage.
- Continue to evaluate and encourage proven alternatives to traditional health care delivery that will result in greater accessibility and affordability to Kansas employers and residents, reducing the number of uninsured and underinsured.
- Raising the age to purchase cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and tobacco products to 21 years of age and older.
- Proposals that improve access to, and training for, physicians, nurses and other medical professionals - including mental health professionals.
- Private and employer-based healthcare solutions that increase access to quality health care and reduce costs.
- A better, less disruptive path to access by building on the current public-private system by expanding Medicaid in non-expansion states; stabilizing the insurance exchanges by restoring cost-sharing subsidies for low-income consumers and implementing well-designed reinsurance programs; increasing subsidies to more lower-income people wanting to purchase private coverage on the marketplaces; and funding efforts to help consumers enroll in health plans.
- Increased funding for Graduate Medical Education in response to the shortage of physicians (especially in primary care).
- System enhancements and funding to support a strong safety net for mental health services.

The Chamber opposes:

- The proposal by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to remove Donor Service Areas (DSA) and



Regions from the current organ allocation plan. Such a proposal will reduce the number of organs available to Kansans and place small programs that serve rural populations at risk, while placing African Americans, other minorities, and financially challenged and rural Americans, all at a disadvantage. The focus of HRSA should be on increasing organ donation and OPO (Organ Procurement Organization) accountability, not the allocation of an already scarce resource.

- Repeal of the ACA with a future effective date
- Proposals that adopt or lead to adoption of a single-payer, government-run healthcare systems such as “Medicare For All.”

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Chamber supports free and fair international trade policies that encourage economic development in northeast Kansas and the rest of the state; reduce trade barriers; protect U.S. intellectual property; modernize export-control rules; eliminate unfair trade practices; and encourage efficient international trade assistance programs through cooperation and coordination among local, state and federal agencies.

The Chamber supports:

- The Export-Import Bank of the United States (Bank) as a source of funding support that is of critical importance in leveling the international competitive climate for businesses that export goods and services and keeping them and their jobs in our state.
- Timely nomination and Senate confirmation of board members, at a minimum needed to maintain a quorum and necessary for the efficient, effective and full operation of the Bank.
- Export promotion programs centered on small- and medium-sized businesses which account for the vast majority of all exporters.
- Legislation that requires Congressional approval of new or increased tariffs proposed in the interest of national security in accordance with Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.
- Approval of the United States/Mexico/Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA).
- Reasonable and balanced international trade agreements that knock down barriers to U.S. businesses abroad and keeps our markets open to foreign goods and services. Specifically, the Chamber urges a re-evaluation and reversal of the decision to withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), recognizing the importance of the growing Asian market for US goods and services, including Kansas products. Focus should be on modifications of the TPP terms as needed.

The Chamber opposes:

- The Administration's recent and expanding use of tariffs that has resulted in retaliatory tariffs imposed by many of our key trading partners, negatively impacting many of our domestic businesses and industries.

## PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Chamber supports adding incentives and removing impediments to the use of private capital and resources in the design, construction and operation of public or public/private projects that enhance local safety, economic development and quality of life.

The Chamber supports:

- Federal agencies generally taking a “right size” staffing approach in order to efficiently handle and respond to normal and routine demands while looking to contract with the private sector during periods of peak activity.

## REGULATORY REFORM

The Chamber believes that the federal regulatory system must be operated in an open and transparent manner. Proposed regulations should undergo rigorous technical analysis and thorough review and comment by those affected to ensure that they are cost-effective, flexible, and minimize regulatory burdens on business.

### Small Business Size Standards

The Chamber supports:

- Exploration of a mid-size business tier addition within the size standards methodology and a mentor-pro-tégé program where mid-tiered firms become mentors to small firms.
- Federal government contracts to be smaller and unbundled, enabling small businesses to pursue more contracts.

### Banking Regulation

The Chamber supports:

- Policies that are not harmful to community banks' and credit unions' and other business' ability to grow and expand, because access to credit is a significant factor in economic development.
- Encouraging federal policymakers to only support regulation that is based on core principles for banks that enable them to be successful during any economic cycle.

## SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The Chamber believes that a secure retirement for American workers is fundamental to the country's growth and continued prosperity. Public policy should encourage individuals to save, invest and plan for their retirement

The Chamber supports:

- Programs that stimulate individual initiative to provide for retirement needs.
- Policies and other reasonable efforts to sustain the long-term solvency of Social Security, including a balanced and appropriate mix of increased contributions, extended retirement age, and potential means testing of benefits.

## TAXES

The Chamber supports balanced tax policy that encourages economic growth, prosperity and job creation that leads to intra-state, interstate and international competitiveness. The Chamber believes balanced budgets and minimal debt are key principles of sound fiscal policy and movement in that direction should be a priority for the federal government.

### Taxation

The Chamber supports:

- Balanced federal tax policies that:
  - o Preserve and encourage economic growth, productivity and jobs
  - o Enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. businesses and encourage multi-national companies to repatriate profits and conduct additional US-based operations while reducing incentives for corporate inversions.
- Business-oriented revisions to the federal tax code enacted by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA), specifically including the repeal of the corporate alternative minimum tax, doubling of the estate and gift tax exemption and the reduction in the corporate income tax rate, as supported in the Chamber's 2018 Federal Public Policy Platform.
- Preservation and protection of the current legal and tax structure of employee stock ownership plans (ESOP). The Chamber

advocates for the enactment of the Promotion and Expansion of Private Employee Ownership Act that eliminates barriers that businesses and their owners face in establishing a new S corporation ESOP or expanding the employee-ownership stake in an S corporation.

- Adoption of tax treaties that support fair taxation on imported and exported goods.

The Chamber opposes:

- Efforts to change federal tax policy that would limit the option for qualified service providers to elect the cash method of accounting only to those firms with less than \$10 million (or other arbitrary caps) in annual gross revenue.

### Tax Incentives

The Chamber supports:

- Existing tax incentives including energy, environmental, and economic development tax incentives. These safeguards result in increased protection of the environment while encouraging investment in economic development.

### E-Commerce/Fairness

The Chamber supports:

- The United States Supreme Court's decision in *South Dakota v. Wayfair* (Wayfair) that enables state governments to collect sales taxes and use taxes from remote and on-line retailers with no physical presence in their state, by mandating under federal law that those remote online retailers charge and collect sales tax regardless of sales situs. The Chamber encourages Congress to pass legislation codifying the criteria suggested in Wayfair to provide clear guidance and consistency for states implementing such sales tax collection; however, such legislation should not preempt state and local sales and use tax authority nor otherwise interfere with the distribution of such revenue according to existing formulas under state law.

## TECHNOLOGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS; CYBER SECURITY

The Chamber promotes market-based policies to promote private sector broadband investment and competition. The Chamber supports policies and programs addressing cyber security needs and threats that balance public safety with individual and private-sector rights to privacy.

The Chamber supports:

- Workable privacy laws that protect consumers without unduly inhibiting e-commerce.
- Continued technological development, expansion and deployment of broadband, which is so vital to small and large, urban and rural businesses alike, as well as individual consumers, and can best be achieved with significant private investment, which is driven by the forces of competition. Competition spurs private investment, furthers the principles of free enterprise, and stimulates business growth.
- Reasonable measures to protect individual's constitutional rights to privacy with respect to electronic records and transmission of information.
- Development of technologies, processes, practices and other measures designed to protect computers and computer networks, programs and data from unauthorized access, attack and damage.

The Chamber opposes:

- Outdated laws and regulations that impede U.S. technological innovation, investment and deployment that are vital to the U.S. economy.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Chamber supports long-term transportation policies with predictable, dedicated and sustainable funding that maximizes the benefits derived from local, regional and national transportation networks.

The Chamber encourages investment in public transportation to relieve traffic congestion, minimize vehicle emissions and provide low-cost modes of transportation that connects employers with employees. Planning and investment in transportation infrastructure should contemplate emerging modes of transportation to allow for more cost-efficient implementation of new-to-market solutions.

The Chamber supports:

- Modernization and expansion of the U.S. 69 Highway – particularly in the areas within and adjacent to the City of Overland Park
- Fully funding the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to maximize benefits derived from local, regional and surface national transportation networks.
- Timely enactment of legislation to succeed the FAST Act when it expires in 2020. Such legislation should provide increased national funding to adequately meet critical national and regional transportation needs in a predictable, sustainable fashion. Its funding should be derived from multiple sources primarily reflecting users' impacts on – and benefits derived from – our transportation network. Key features should include:
  - o Increasing and indexing for inflation dedicated revenue from fuel taxes and other current user fees to maintain purchasing power (the current gas tax has not been increased since 1993 and has lost more than 64 percent of its original buying power as a result);
  - o Exploring new funding sources that will not be diminished by ongoing shifts in vehicle fuel types and ownership patterns; and
  - o Expanding dedicated policies and resources for accelerating well-defined transportation projects that significantly enhance regional or national economic development.
- The Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology Council (NETT) to work toward commercialization of emerging modes of transportation such as the Hyperloop and autonomous vehicles.

To ensure that national infrastructure investments reflect important regional and local priorities, the Chamber further supports:

Adopting federal policies and procedures that:

- Optimize local and state flexibility in meeting regional and local transportation priorities, improving transportation network performance and streamlining transportation project reviews and approvals; and
- Maintain the current federal infrastructure funding share formula at 80 percent federal and 20 percent state/local.
- Creating a legal and regulatory framework for fully realizing the potential for connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) that ensures that:
  - The CAV potential can be explored by public and private entities while maintaining or improving our state's vehicle safety record;
  - The cost of CAV-required infrastructure improvements are borne by parties that profit or benefit from them; and
  - Public sector investments in support of CAV deployment do not diminish legacy transportation networks as long as they serve a preponderance of non-CAV users.

The Chamber opposes:

- Adjusting the predominant existing infrastructure funding share formula from 80% federal-20% state/local to 20% federal-80% state/local as an unreasonable and inequitable cost shifting.

## WORKPLACE AND LABOR

The Chamber supports policies that address workforce needs while minimizing burdensome requirements that directly and indirectly increase costs to the employer.

The Chamber supports:

- Enactment of comprehensive and realistic immigration reform policies that support business workforce needs including:
  - o Establishing a reliable, efficient, accurate employment eligibility confirmation system that is easy to use and provides a good faith “safe harbor” to employers relying on the Employment Eligibility Confirmation System.
  - o Establishing an earned pathway to legalization for undocumented workers already contributing to our economy, provided that they are law-abiding.
  - o Continuation and expansion of permanent visa programs for highly skilled workers through the H-1B visa program and other programs that enable employers to access and keep the talent necessary for business to compete in the global market.
  - o Raising or eliminating the cap on H-2B visas. This seasonal worker program is vital to small businesses that depend on H-2B visa personnel to fill those positions that the local workforce cannot fill.
- Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act that would remove the per-nation caps on employment based green cards, creating a merit-based, “first come, first served” legal immigration system for high-skilled employees.

The Chamber opposes:

- Regulatory expansion of overtime standards such as those unilaterally proposed by the DOL in 2016 that include excessive increases in the salary thresholds triggering overtime pay requirements and increases that do not make allowance for geographic base salary differences, that result in significantly increased compliance costs for business as well as unintended, adverse consequences for employees.

## STANDING PRIORITIES

The Chamber’s standing policies, which may or may not be introduced in any given Congress:

- Support the University of Kansas Medical Center’s effort to achieve NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center designation.
- Support legislation and appropriate funding which would advance and promote the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor.
- Maintain funding for the National Bio and Agro Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Ks.
- Support increased funding for federal research agencies including the National Institutes of Health, National Science

Foundation, US Department of Agriculture, and other agencies that provide funding for life sciences research, development and commercialization.

- Support efforts to protect, improve and simplify S corporation tax rules.
- Support efforts to permanently extend both the work opportunity tax credit and welfare to work tax credit.
- Support efforts to expand the R&D tax credit and make it a permanent part of the tax law.
- Support restraining the IRS’s ability to challenge the use of the cash method of accounting, which adversely affects the nation’s small businesses.
- Support meaningful bankruptcy reform that rewards personal responsibility and restores fairness to the bankruptcy system.
- Support efforts to reduce burdens associated with anti-trust and pre-merger filings and eliminate needless reporting requirements and filing fees.
- Support product liability reform and additional tort reform measures that provide fair treatment of business in the courts and before regulatory agencies.
- Support the current arrangement of employer and union negotiation, including employees’ rights to a democratic secret ballot process, and oppose initiatives to 1) abolish secret ballot elections in favor of card check majorities for union recognition and 2) promote the influence of federal government arbitrators in the union contract negotiation process.
- Oppose any and all unfunded mandates.
- Oppose any unreasonable expansion of federal minimum wage and believes that any increase must be coupled with provisions that recognize the impact this will have on businesses.
- Support the family-friendly purpose of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), but favors clarification and simplification of the Act’s requirements. The Chamber opposes efforts to expand leave or to mandate paid sick leave under the FMLA.
- Support the repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, which created a “prevailing wage,” usually the union rate, for any construction contract over \$2,000 funded in whole or part by the federal government. The repeal of this Act would spur local economic growth by making it easier for state and local governments to fund federally-subsidized projects such as school construction and transportation infrastructure improvements and would decrease overall costs to taxpayers.
- Support workplace safety by encouraging shared commitments to safety between OSHA and employers. This would include cooperative partnership agreements between OSHA, labor organizations and employers. The Chamber supports an even-handed approach by OSHA that recognizes employers who are committed to protecting their employees while they continuously strive to improve their safety and health management systems and opposes efforts to expand penalties including criminal indictments of individuals. Focusing on increased civil and criminal fines and penalties against employers does not address the primary cause of accidents, injuries, and fatalities on job sites.