



**Testimony to Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee**  
**Supporting HB2269**  
**March 22, 2023**  
**The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber) urges the House Federal and State Affairs Committee to favorably pass House Bill 2269. The KC Chamber, representing over 2,000 businesses in the Greater Kansas City area (40 percent in Kansas), firmly believes tobacco prevention and cessation directly impacts business productivity and the Kansas' economy. The Chamber supports bills like HB2269 that deter individuals from beginning usage of tobacco and other nicotine delivery products and encourages cessation of these addictive and harmful products. For years, the KC Chamber and its Healthy KC Coalition have championed tobacco cessation policies across Kansas and are eager to lend their support to this bill.

**Cost to Business:** Each year, more businesses discover that employees who smoke are a significant cost to their business in health care and insurance costs and in lost productivity. The average annual cost to a private employer for each of its employees who use tobacco is around \$5,816. Besides being a hindrance on economic productivity for the state, tobacco usage also costs taxpayers by driving up publicly born health care costs.

**Data on Smoking:** Confirming the federal law of raising the purchase age of tobacco and nicotine delivery products to 21 will have a significant impact on the amount of tobacco users in the State of Kansas according to extensive research on the issue. Research shows that 95% of smokers started before they were 21 and that those who had their first cigarettes by age 18 are almost twice as likely to become lifelong smokers as those who have not tried it by age 21. HB2269 will reduce the number of teens and youth using tobacco products, we believe the language drafted is a meaningful step for young Kansans. Since 2019, 30 states have passed legislation to raise the sales age of tobacco to 21, and in Kansas over 25 cities and counties have passed similar ordinances.

**Data on Nicotine-Related Deaths:** According to the National Youth Tobacco Survey, there was a 78% increase in e-cigarette use among high school students in 2018 and an increase in overall tobacco use which reverses previous declines. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States killing more people than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders and suicides—combined. In Kansas, this translates to 4,400 lives every year.

HB2269 represents a responsible and effective health care solution to support Kansas employers, employees, health care providers and communities. The State of Kansas can take an important step at improving the lives for our youth and Kansas' workforce by implementing the provisions in HB2269. The KC Chamber and its Board of Directors encourage this committee to pass HB2269 with a favorable recommendation.

**Katrina Abraham**

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