

February 15, 2012

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce and our nearly 1600 members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2747.

The Wichita Metro Chamber has appeared before you several times in the recent past in support of attempts at comprehensive income tax reform. Our membership has clearly communicated this as their top priority. A recent survey of Wichita Chamber members showed that 62% considered income tax reform a top priority for state policymakers. In addition, 68% of our membership favored either significant income tax reduction or complete elimination of income taxes. HB 2747 is a strong step in the right direction.

While we are generally supportive of HB 2747 and all attempts to lower taxes, increase development and investment and overall attempts to create jobs and a vibrant economy in Kansas, we must register some reservation about using Highway funds for purposes other than what Kansans have been promised those funds would be used for. It is a policy position of the Wichita Chamber that we advocate that highway funds only be spent on highway, bridge and other transportation infrastructure related projects, including lowering airfares in all areas of Kansas. If money is to be borrowed to fund income tax reduction, we would strongly encourage policymakers to fully repay the Highway Fund as promised.

Kansas is clearly at a crossroads. We are losing the battle for jobs and citizens. Despite what opponents may say, reducing income taxes is a proven strategy for growth. While it may be fact that citizens don't move to states based on income tax rates, it is also a fact that citizens do move to states with dynamic economies and where jobs are plentiful. The data proves that states with lower or no income taxes are states where job and wealth are being created at rates that exceed states with higher income taxes. Kansas should act now by lowering income taxes and create a path towards total elimination.

Thank you,

Jason Watkins  
Director Government Relations