



Testimony to House Committee on Commerce
Neutral Testimony: HB 2529
February 17, 2020
The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber) supports a pro-business environment and innovative strategies and investment in effective and efficient economic development that will help the Kansas City area grow and remain globally competitive. The Chamber advocates for responsible data-based strategies to increase the availability of capital for new, expanding, and culturally diverse businesses. The KC Chamber believes the STAR Bonds program is a valuable development tool and recognizes common-sense reforms to the program will aid in the program's longevity as a tool to grow business in the state.

At this time, the KC Chamber has no position on this bill before the House Commerce Committee. However, we are encouraged to see the Kansas Department of Commerce proposing STAR Bonds as a tool in its Framework for Growth economic development plan. It has been nearly 35 years since Kansas has instituted a comprehensive strategy for economic growth. The KC Chamber believes an effective comprehensive development framework should include an educated and healthy workforce, robust transportation system, and data-driven, effective economic development tools to attract economic development and promote growth of existing businesses in the state. When utilized properly, STAR Bonds have proven to be one of these useful incentives for business growth.

The growth and success of western Wyandotte County should serve as a prime example of this program's effectiveness. Developments such as the Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kansas, and the corresponding development from this project, are just two examples of the success that STAR Bonds has had on a community. As we move further into the 21st century and economies become more complex, it is critical that economic development tools, and measures of accountability for these economic development tools, adapt so that they can continue to drive progress for our communities.

The KC Chamber looks forward to working the Kansas Department of Commerce and the House Commerce Committee to identify ways we can work to grow Kansas' economy. Common-sense and data-driven economic development programs, including STAR Bonds, should continue to be a tool Kansas can utilize to remain globally competitive in a 21st century economy.

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