



**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

**Testimony in Support of HB 2101- Extending University Engineering Initiative**

**Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber represents small, medium and large businesses of all industry segments across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2101, which extends the state's Engineering Initiative for another 10 years.

The UEI was first put in place in 2011 after the engineering community stressed the need to increase the number engineers graduating in the state. The Chamber has a diverse membership, including multiple engineering firms of all sizes from across the state. While workforce development remains a top concern across all industries, the Engineering Initiative has shown a strong return on investment for the state as it has achieved the goals set out with its creation 10 years ago.

This program uses ELARF funds for programs at Kansas State, Wichita State and the University of Kansas and is administered through both the Department of Commerce and the Kansas Board of Regents. While it has been successful so far in achieving outcomes, our members continue to stress the need to hire more professional engineers for their firms.

In closing, we are proud to support House Bill 2101, a program that has been successful in utilizing the strong engineering programs at our state's universities to train the future workforce and match employment needs of Kansas engineering companies. Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 2101 and I am happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.