

February 4, 2019

Representative Sean Tarwater, Chairman
Kansas Commerce Committee
Kansas House of Representatives
Capital Building - Room 151 S
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in support of House Bill 2118 Aerospace Education Tax Credit. As an economic development professional with over 30 years of service working in my third state this is a critically important piece of legislation that could greatly enhance Kansas's current standing within the aviation and aerospace industries.

For many years Kansas was the top location for aviation related projects. Now states like North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alabama, and others have caught up to or surpassed Kansas in the number of new jobs and companies working within the aviation/aerospace industries. This past year I attended an unmanned aviation system conference in Oklahoma where Governor Mary Fallin talked about hundreds of new jobs that could be directly tied to their state's tax incentives for aerospace engineers. It has allowed both their existing industries and new companies locating in the state to attract employees in high demand to Oklahoma as well as keep graduates of Oklahoma universities working within our neighboring state. Oklahoma legislators have extended the bill until 2026. They claim for every dollar spent with the program there are \$2.00 in return.

It's no secret that workforce is the number one issue that we face in keeping and attracting companies in Kansas. With the approval of HB 2118 our existing companies and new companies looking at Kansas will be able to attract this aerospace engineers with this tax credit program. These jobs are high paying positions that impact the communities they are located within. For Kansas to return to the top tier of aviation/aerospace producing states, Kansas needs to pass the Aerospace Education Tax Credit. This program will become the most important tool within the economic development toolbox.

If I can answer any questions, please call upon me.

Sincerely,



D. Mitch Robinson, CECD
Executive Director
Salina Community E.D.O.