



House Bill 2059 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

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Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

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Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce expresses its support for House Bill 2059, which amends the common consumption area law to permit, rather than require, cities or counties creating such areas to block public streets or roadways from motorized traffic and to allow the boundaries to be designated by signage.

The Topeka Chamber is part of a constellation of organizations all of which are dedicated to growing the economy in Topeka and Shawnee County and to making the future of our community more prosperous. Lasting economic growth and prosperity can only occur if our cities and towns are successful in attracting young professionals who will form our workforce in years to come.

Among many other efforts to make our community more attractive, the Topeka Chamber supported the entertainment districts contemplated by the legislature in 2017 when it empowered local governments to designate areas within which responsible adults could consume alcoholic beverages sold by licensed lawful establishments. As we stated then, it is appropriate and time to endow local leaders with the authority to consider the creation of this type of amenity for their citizens and visitors.

That effort was a good first step but our efforts to establish a successful common consumption area have been stymied by the current law's requirement that public streets within the area be closed to traffic. The amenities in Topeka which would otherwise naturally comprise the elements of a common consumption area (e.g. the downtown plaza, the new restaurants, our community theater) lie on either side of Topeka's main street. This is presumably the situation in most Kansas communities. Requiring that the street be closed renders the creation of a consumption area which connects those various amenities implausible.



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We support House Bill 2059 because it gives local officials more flexible in designing common consumption areas which fit their communities' specific needs. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

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