



To: House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
Date: 30 January 2020

Chairman Tarwater and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the more than 800 business members of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2507.

It will come as no surprise to this committee that the Overland Park Chamber is engaged in daily conversations with business leaders throughout our community. A common theme during these conversations is the persistent concern that our workforce faces a shortage of qualified workers to fill vital jobs. Record low unemployment and the increased demand for highly-skilled workers are leading factors contributing to the shortage.

The Blue Valley, Shawnee Mission and Olathe school districts are at the forefront of preparing students for a variety of in-demand career paths that will drive our future economy. A key component of these programs is engaging students in real-world, hands-on experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

We believe one barrier to these tremendously valuable programs is the concern expressed by business owners regarding liability. HB 2005 helps clarify responsibilities when it comes to engaging secondary students in off-site work-based training experiences in a manner that appears fair to all involved.

In our conversations with representatives from the school districts we understand they may have suggestions that would strengthen the bill. We believe their input is important and working with them will provide a finished product that further strengthens the bill and better accomplishes the intended outcome.

We respectfully request that the committee work with the districts and other stakeholders to incorporate their suggestions. With that caveat the Overland Park Chamber supports HB 2507 and urges the committee to recommend it favorably for passage.