



**Testimony to Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Supporting SB 252
January 23 and January 24, 2020
The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**

Chairman Sullentrop and Members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee:

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 2,000 member businesses and organizations in greater Kansas City (over 40 percent are in Kansas), supports SB 252 which will expand KanCare for thousands of Kansans, provide responsible, long-term funding strategies for Kansas and spur job growth in the state.

The KC Chamber believes Kansas would be well-served by enacting legislation now to expand KanCare and protect the interests of Kansans. Kansas has already lost over \$3.8 billion of *our* tax dollars by not expanding KanCare. It is critical to ensure Kansas does not continue to lose tax-payer dollars that rightfully belong to our state for this program that would advance opportunity and productivity of thousands of hard-working Kansans.

According to studies by George Washington University and data from the US Census Bureau and Kansas Department of Health and Environment, if SB 252 was to be enacted, KanCare expansion would provide health coverage to over 8,700 residents for both Johnson and Wyandotte Counties who are currently uninsured. Expansion would also create over 3,000 new jobs in these counties alone. Furthermore, KanCare expansion would inject at least \$54.8 million in new annual health care spending in Wyandotte County and \$58 million in Johnson County. The KC Chamber is also supportive of the work referral system included in the expansion plan which will allow policymakers and businesses to make better data-informed decisions on how to bring more people into the labor force.

Without expansion of KanCare, the state's uninsured will continue to seek access to health care in the most expensive place—the emergency room—leading to increased costs for all Kansas taxpayers, particularly the business sector.

SB 252 represents a responsible, Kansas health care solution impacting Kansas employers, employees, health care providers, and Kansas communities. This bill will provide much needed health care in a responsibly funded way while also growing new jobs and injecting billions of dollars into the Kansas economy. The KC Chamber encourages this committee to pass the bill forward with a favorable recommendation.

Cathy Bennett
Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Government Relations
The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
816.374.5412