



March 8, 2022

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and our nearly 1,500 members, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony in support of H.B. 2631, AN ACT concerning education; relating to career technical education; enacting the career technical education credential and transition incentive for employment success act; providing state aid to school districts for students obtaining a credential; establishing the career technical education credential and transition incentive fund.

HB 2631 would enact the Career Technical Education (CTE) Credential and Transition Incentive (CTI) for Employment Success Act. The bill would provide a new category of state aid to school districts for students obtaining a CTE credential. The bill would establish the CTE Credential and Transition Incentive Fund.

The Chamber supports this legislation because it would add another needed tool in our state's efforts to recruit and train a talented workforce. The south-central region of Kansas is home to some of the world's premier advanced manufacturing firms. These firms pay high wages, provide great benefits and supply the United States and the world with products essential to the global economy. Among the many advantages of our advanced manufacturing cluster is that many of these jobs do not require a four-year degree. Talented individuals have the opportunity to enter into rewarding and lifelong careers without the burden of high student loan debt.

In spite of the opportunities, our world class firms continue to struggle to find workers. There are many reasons related to this challenge. One thing that would assist in overcoming our lack of workforce would be encouragement by Kansas secondary educational institutions for students to consider a technical career. We believe HB 2631 would help incentivize school leaders and teachers to share the virtues of technical education and careers in the various trades.

For the reasons stated above, we urge the Committee to report H.B. 2631 favorable for passage.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins