

Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce

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THE CHAMBER
WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NEWS RELEASE

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Wichita Regional Chamber Supports Aviation Bill in Topeka

WICHITA, KS - Today, the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce testified in support of House Bill 2036, an aviation-related bill, which authorizes tax credits to graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and their employers.

In remarks prepared for the Commerce, Labor and Economic Development legislative committee hearing in Topeka, Chamber Lobbyist Jason Watkins said, "This is a much needed measure that would enhance our state's ability to compete for high-paying jobs in an economic sector that Kansas once dominated."

"Over the last decade Kansas has been challenged by numerous other states competing for our high paying aviation jobs. Sadly, we are not faring well in this fight," said Watkins. "Between 2005 and 2015 Kansas saw aviation employment drop by 17%. Conversely, Oklahoma saw an increase of 91% and North Carolina saw an increase 120%." (source: BLS QCEW, Private, All Employees) Aviation-related jobs have returned, they just haven't returned to Kansas.

Watkins testified that aviation firms are growing employment, but they are growing employment in states with better incentives and programs more inviting of their capital investment. This investment is in employees through very high wages and great benefit programs. These states are reaping the economic benefits of their investments. Kansas should do the same.

The Wichita Regional Chamber, representing 1,600 members, strongly urged the Committee to report HB 2036 favorable for passage. This bill would go into effect on or after January 1, 2018 and would apply to any person newly employed who has been awarded an undergraduate or graduate degree, or a technical degree or certificate from a qualified program by an institution.

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The mission of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce is to drive economic growth and community advancement in the Wichita region. Visit our website wichitachamber.org and follow us on Twitter @ChamberWichita, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and our blog.