

February 11, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

Last week, the Center for Economic Information at the University of Missouri-Kansas City released a study examining the best-available data about the economic implications of immigration in Kansas. The report, *Economic and Fiscal Contributions of International Immigrants in the State of Kansas*, reveals important facts about the role of immigrants in our economy and society and should help to provide a backdrop for any discussion about immigration and immigrant-related policy in the Kansas Legislature this year. Among the insights, all described in far greater detail in the attached report:

- Immigrants in Kansas are more likely to be in their prime working years, are more likely to hold jobs, and pay higher per capita state and local taxes than native-born Kansans. Immigration directly accounts for seven to eight percent of the Kansas economy, and that every immigrant job creates an additional .828 jobs in the state.
- Job opportunities in major Kansas industries have attracted immigrant workers to both highly skilled professions and low-skilled jobs in the Sunflower State, so much so that major Kansas industries now depend on immigrant labor. The Kansas meat-processing, construction and hospitality industries rely heavily upon immigrant labor. Highly skilled, well-educated immigrants also are finding jobs here. Nearly one in four computer software developer jobs is held by an immigrant and more than one-third of high school or college subject instructors are foreign-born.
- Kansas immigrants pay more than their per capita share of state and local taxes—\$4,180 per year, compared to \$4,124 paid annually by native Kansans. These taxes help to subsidize education and health benefits enjoyed by native Kansans.
- The study's primary author, economist Dr. Peter J. Eaton, concluded that, "substantially reducing the number of foreign-born individuals who have jobs in the State of Kansas would have negative consequences for native employment and income as well as cause a significant deterioration in the state's fiscal situation during this critical recovery period...Even if every unemployed non-

immigrant were able and available to take a job currently held by an immigrant, there would still be almost 50,000 jobs not taken.”

We recognize that legislators have different opinions about immigration policy. It is our intent, by sharing this report, to inject clear economic data into the policy debate. We look forward to opportunities to talk with you about the findings of this report and, we hope, to working together to craft policies that reflect our economic realities and our shared aspirations for prosperity.