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January 31, 2017

Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Re: HOUSE BILL No. 2036, AN ACT concerning taxation; relating to certain income tax credits for graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and their employers.

Don Weiser

President/CEO

Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

I first want to thank Chairman Mason, Vice Chair Corbet and fellow distinguished committee members for the opportunity to address House Bill 2036. House Bill 2036 offers certain income tax credits for graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and their employers.

Our organization represents 1,150 small, mid-market and large companies across Saline County, with the mission to mobilize private and public sector leadership, expertise and resources to support job creation, expansion and development of all segments of Salina and Saline County, Kansas.

Salina, KS has a large cluster of aviation related research, training and businesses located in the Salina Airport Authority's industrial center. One of the largest anchors in the industrial center is the Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus. Kansas State Polytechnic has become a global leader in both aviation and within the last decade a rising star in the UAS arena. Their aviation related programs include Airport Management, Aviation Maintenance Management, Professional Pilot, Aviation Safety Minor, Avionics Maintenance Technology, and Composite Repair. In addition they offer degree programs in Unmanned Aircraft Systems Flight and Operations, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Design and an Unmanned Aircraft Systems Minor.

Kansas State Polytechnic understands the importance of providing its students with research opportunities, cutting edge technology and equipment and an exclusive education. It was among the first institutions in the U.S. to allow students to provide students the opportunity to fly the UAS vehicles as part of their curriculum. The community continues to support the efforts of Kansas State Polytechnic as a global leader in the Aviation and UAS fields with the strategic goal of incubating aviation technology related start-ups.

While tax expenditures represent forgone revenue to the state, we know that tax credit programs serve as significant economic development tools to local communities and counties. House Bill 2036 would continue that by providing a value added incentive for both businesses and employers that currently have operations in Salina and also to businesses seeking to call Salina and Kansas home. It addition it will also help reverse the brain drain effect of highly qualified and Kansas Board of Regents institutions trained graduates leaving Salina and Kansas.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to economic advancement of Salina, Saline County and the state of Kansas as a whole.

Right place. Right reason. Right *now*.