

March 6, 2024

Dear Chairman Billinger and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for consideration of SB 529 in support of allowing a ballot issue to form a special district for the ongoing support of The Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center. As an active community leader on the Chamber Board, Economic Development, Rotary, and other community organizations, as well as CEO for one of the largest employers in Lawrence, Kansas, I strongly support the work of Peaslee Tech and this effort to ensure its ongoing stability.

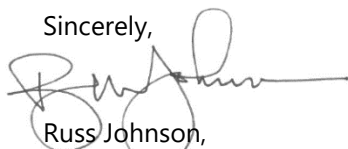
Peaslee Tech was established by a consortium of partners, including the Economic Development Corporation of Lawrence, the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, the Chamber, local industry, and private donors. Peaslee Tech's mission is to grow a workforce, rich with technically skilled individuals, within the Lawrence and Douglas County communities. LMH Health, the sole community hospital in our county has been a significant beneficiary of this important organization.

Peaslee Tech opened in August of 2015 and has demonstrated its effective place in our community from the start and through its duration. Enrollments have grown dramatically over time from 100 to in year one to now having 26 career training preparation programs and more than 700 online programs and courses. Peaslee Tech offers all kinds of programs and courses to support Transportation, Building Trades, Skilled Trades, Industrial Maintenance, Automotive Technology, Auto Body Repair, Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC, Healthcare and others. At LMH Health we have been supported by their programs in both the Clinical Medical Assistants and the Sterile Processing Technicians. These are two areas that have strong earnings potential for individuals and the ability to establish a career in healthcare.

As you probably know, Peaslee Tech is funded primarily by annual requests to the City of Lawrence and Douglas County, and tuition and, while this has been acceptable, we really need stable funding to ensure the sustainability of the school that is so vital to our community.

Peaslee Tech is requesting SB 529 be enacted in the 2024 session of the Kansas Legislature to enable the Douglas County Commission to make a ballot proposition, that if approved by the majority of voters, would levy a 0.50 mill property tax fund to support Peaslee Tech. Please give this your support for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Johnson".

Russ Johnson,  
President and CEO, LMH Health

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