



Testimony in Support of SB 529
Ways and Means Committee
March 6, 2024

Chairman Billinger and members of the committee,

The Chamber of Lawrence, Kansas expresses its support for Senate Bill 529 an Act that would create The Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center District.

Prior to 2015, Douglas County did not have a technical training center. This severely hampered our community's ability to attract and retain quality jobs. A consortium of stakeholders including The Chamber, the Economic Development Corporation, USD 497, local industry, the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, and private donors came together to create the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Training Center, known as Peaslee Tech. A catalyst for economic growth, providing technical training to a diverse community of learners to meet the current and emerging needs of our community and its employers, Peaslee Tech has grown from 150 students in its first semester in the fall of 2015 to 2,900 students in 2023.

In order to provide quality, affordable training, Peaslee Tech requires supplemental public funding. That funding is requested annually from the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. While this funding is not in jeopardy and Peaslee Tech enjoys great support from both the City of Lawrence and Douglas County, this funding arrangement does not allow them to get a mortgage. Therefore, the leadership of Peaslee Tech would like the opportunity to ask Douglas County voters to approve the creation of a taxing district. The mill levy associated with this district would be roughly equal to the annual funding that Peaslee Tech currently receives from Douglas County citizens.

The Chamber of Lawrence, Kansas represents almost 800 local businesses. We recognize the importance of a quality and trained labor force in attracting job-creating entities to our community and we ask that you support us in these efforts by approving Senate Bill 529.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bonnie Lowe".

Bonnie Lowe, IOM
President & CEO