



**Testimony to Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
Supporting SB 376 March 22, 2018 – written only
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, representing over 2,200 businesses in the Greater Kansas City area, firmly believes tobacco prevention and cessation directly impacts the economic viability of our members and our workforce and calls on the committee to pass SB 376 in order to further health and wellness in Kansas.

Each year, more businesses discover that employees who smoke cost their businesses in health care and insurance costs and in lost productivity. See below for the breakdown of national estimates annually per smoker as provided by The CDC and The Ohio State University:

Smoke Breaks:	\$3,077
Excess Health Care Costs:	\$2,056
Excess Absenteeism:	\$517
Presenteeism*:	\$462
Pension Benefit (If Provided)	(\$296)
Total Cost:	\$5,816

**Presenteeism is defined as reduced productivity related to the effects of nicotine addiction.*

Additionally, data shows decreased productivity from tobacco use costs the Kansas economy roughly \$1.09 billion annually. Tobacco usage does not only cost businesses money, it also costs tax payers and is a hindrance on economic productivity for the state.

Increasing the cost of tobacco products creates a viable barrier to smoking and is effective in reducing the number of users of tobacco. Leading research shows that for every 10% increase in a tobacco tax, there is a corresponding 3-4% decrease in use.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States killing more people than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders and suicides—combined. In Kansas, this translates to 4,400 lives every year. This statistic is reason alone to increase tobacco taxes as an effective preventative measure to curb use.

SB 376 represents a responsible and effective health care solution to support Kansas employers, employees, health care providers and communities. The Kansas government, being a steward of taxpayer dollars, should adopt policies that reduce health care costs, increase productivity, and most importantly, keep the citizens of Kansas healthy. The KC Chamber and member businesses believe a healthy workforce is good for all Kansans and increases the economic vitality for the state. The KC Chamber encourages this committee to pass SB 376 with a favorable recommendation.

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