



Virtual/Oral Testimony in Support of House Bill 2101
Senate Ways & Means Committee
March 23, 2021

Chairman Billinger and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the nearly 900 business members, The Chamber of Lawrence, Kansas would like to express our full support of HB 2101, which would extend the University Engineering Initiative Act for another ten years.

This workforce initiative was developed at the urging of the Kansas business community and was designed to increase the number of annual engineering graduates from our states three research universities - the University of Kansas, Kansas State, and Wichita State University. Administered by the Department of Commerce, this initiative met its goal graduation rate three years ahead of the target date and created a combined 1,365 engineering graduates in 2021 alone. However, demand from the private sector for engineering graduates still far outstrips supply as more than 70% of private sector engineering firms indicate that they are not able to hire enough engineers.

This initiative receives \$10.5M annually from ELARF funds, evenly divided among the three universities. Each university has used a portion of these funds to make capital improvements to meet the increased size and needs of their engineering programs. These are State General Funds and there is a matching component from the Universities General Operating Fund.

Please support House Bill 2101.

Respectfully,

Hugh Carter
Vice President, External Affairs