



# **2017 Legislative Program**

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Dear Reader:

The Governing Body of the City of Mission annually adopts a state legislative platform to present Mission’s legislative initiatives and policy positions.

The cornerstone of the legislative program is the belief that the governing of public affairs should be as close to the people as possible. Supporting activities that promote and encourage the exercise of authority and responsibility by locally elected officials is a top priority of the City of Mission. This belief is exemplified in local home rule authority, an amendment to the Kansas Constitution that was approved by the citizens of the state over half a century ago.

Generally, the City of Mission supports the Statement of Municipal Policy of the League of Kansas Municipalities and the legislative agenda of Johnson County, Kansas. The City Council works cooperatively each year with the League and other cities to enhance the mutual benefits of Kansas cities.

If you have any questions concerning the 2017 Legislative Platform, please, do not hesitate to contact me at (913) 676-8350.

Sincerely,

Steve Schowengerdt  
Mayor

**Governing Body**

**Mayor**

Steve Schowengerdt

**Ward I**

Tom Geraghty  
Pat Quinn

**Ward II**

Nick Schlossmacher  
Arcie Rothrock

**Ward III**

Kristin Inman  
Debbie Kring

**Ward IV**

Ron Appletoft  
Suzanne Gibbs



State and municipal governments work together to provide citizens with many services they require and have come to expect. As the local branch of government, the City of Mission understands our citizens' needs and is equipped to respond to them effectively and efficiently. While we respect the State government's role, we continue to advocate for the protection of home rule authority to ensure citizens' needs are met. We favor local decisions being made at the local level. The City of Mission supports the following positions and advocates for them on behalf of those who live and work in our community. The City of Mission:

- Supports the repeal of the local government property tax lid.
- Opposes proposals that would increase the tax burden for local residents, including:
  - revoking the local government sales tax exemption
  - providing further exemptions to sales and property tax for select industries
  - establishing artificial limits upon appraised valuation growth
- Supports a balanced State budget that honors the State's commitments to fully funding employee pensions (KPEERS), the T-WORKS comprehensive transportation plan, and local government revenue sharing.
- Supports retaining existing government transparency statutes as they exist today, including the Kansas Open Meetings Act and the Kansas Open Records Act.
- Opposes regulation that would affect cities and local officials ability to participate in the State legislative process or join organizations who provide information or advocate on behalf of our city and citizens.

All of our positions reflect and support the Kansas constitutional authority of Home Rule for cities. Our local communities across the state are best served, and citizens' values and standards are best reflected, when local taxing and spending are determined by local voters and taxpayers. Preserving Home Rule correctly protects the right of local elected officials and their constituents to find solutions to the issues and problems unique to their community.



## **Finance and Taxation**

### **Support Repeal of the Property Tax Lid\***

The City of Mission supports the repeal of the property tax lid passed by the 2015 Legislature and amended by the 2016 Legislature. Tax and spending lids impede local residents' ability to shape their own community through the election process. We believe those elected to manage the affairs of cities and counties can be most responsive to the local taxpayers and make budget and tax decisions that best reflect the community's need and financial interests. Absent a repeal, the state-imposed property tax lid on local governments should be modified to replace the expensive and cumbersome mandatory election with a protest petition provision instead.

### **Oppose Further Reductions to the Tax Base \***

The City supports stable revenues, and urges the Legislature not to further restrict the tax base, including limitations on ad valorem appraised valuation growth or industry specific, special tax treatment through exemptions or property classification. We do not support changes in State taxation policy that would narrow the tax base, significantly reduce available funding for key programs, or put Kansas counties and cities at a competitive sales tax disadvantage with Missouri. We do not support a sales tax on professional services.

### **Retain the Local Government Sales Tax Exemption\***

Mission supports the current law that exempts local government and public construction projects from sales tax. Imposing sales tax on current government purchases and projects will have only one effect: increased local taxation. Only the State government benefits from this sales tax and our citizens would pay the bill through higher property taxes. Money saved from the sales tax exemption on local government purchases stays in the community and goes directly to enhancing municipal programs and services.

## **State Spending**

### **Support A Balanced State Budget That Preserves Local Government Funding \***

Maintaining local government revenues is a primary concern for the City of Mission, particularly given the significant budget challenges at both the city and state levels. We support a balanced state budget that does not rely on reductions in funding for local units of government. Specifically, both the alcoholic liquor tax funds and the local portion of motor fuels taxes are critical to local service delivery and should not be withheld from local governments.

### **Oppose Unfunded Mandates\***

The City opposes unfunded mandates. If the state seeks to promote particular policy objectives, such mandates should be accompanied by an appropriate level of funding that does not come from an existing City revenue stream.



### **Support Full State Funding of Transportation Investments \***

System needs in the comprehensive transportation program known as T-WORKS significantly exceed available revenues. Recognizing that transportation plays a vital role in connecting the greater Kansas City region to goods, services, and other opportunities, the City of Mission supports continued investment in T-WORKS along with other state funding sources that support investments in our city and regional transportation networks. We oppose any movement to reallocate T-WORKS funding to cover state budget shortfalls. Additionally, the City supports the practice of developing long-term, multi-year, comprehensive programs developed with a combination of technical analysis and local government and other stakeholder involvement.

## **Economic Prosperity**

### **Preserve Local Authority in the Use of Economic Development Tools**

Mission supports local jurisdiction's authority both in determining how and when to use existing economic development tools and in creating new incentive programs to meet community goals. These goals are identified and supported through land-use planning, infrastructure allocation, and financial incentive tools that local communities and stakeholders develop through ongoing communication and prioritization. Each economic development or redevelopment project is unique, and may not be possible without the availability of these tools or the authority to use them.

### **Support the Development of an Adequate and Equitable K-12 Education Funding Formula**

Excellent public education is the cornerstone of an informed, engaged citizenry. As the state legislature develops a new K-12 education funding formula, the City supports an adequate and equitable plan that provides for the quality of education that both Mission and Johnson County patrons expect.

## **Public Safety**

The City of Mission plays a critical role in the protection of the health and safety of its residents. As such, we encourage support and cooperation of public safety partners at the local and state level including the Kansas Highway Patrol and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Recent violence against law enforcement officers, active shooter incidents, and the continued threat of terrorism further demonstrate the need for all public safety agencies to work cooperatively for the safety of all communities in Kansas.



## **Government Transparency**

### **Preserve Existing Provisions in Kansas Open Records and Open Meetings Act\***

We believe that an open government is essential to building public confidence, and that all levels of government should be subject to the same open meeting and open records requirements. State laws governing open records should balance the public's right of access with the necessity of protecting the privacy of individual citizens, the costs of producing requested records, and the ability of public agencies to conduct their essential business functions. Mission supports the current requirements of the Kansas Open Meetings Act and the permitted subject matters for executive sessions. We also support the retention of the current exceptions in the Kansas Open Records Act and the existing allowances for cost recovery for open record requests.

### **Preserve the Ability to Advocate and Educate\***

The City supports local officials and their representatives' ability to freely advocate and educate on issues affecting local governments. We should not be restricted on the use of public funds to accomplish this purpose. Local officials, representing their citizens and taxpayers, must retain the authority to make decisions regarding membership in organizations and to participate in the legislative process. Any reporting system requirements should not increase the administrative burden on local governments.

## **Public Employees**

### **Support Full Funding of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System\***

The City supports achieving a fully-funded public employees retirement system within a reasonable period of time. The State should fully fund its portion of the employer contributions, and the local KPERS should be separated from the state and school retirement system. The system should accumulate sufficient assets during members' working lifetimes to pay all promised benefits when members retire.

We support current provisions as they relate to accumulated leave and other human resources policies to determine retiree benefits for both KPERS and KP&F employees. Possible policy changes could have a negative impact on local government employee recruitment and retention, particularly in the competitive Johnson County employment market.

### **Support Local Authority for Firearm Regulation**

The City of Mission supports the right for local units of government to make decisions at the local level regarding the carrying of guns (open or concealed) in public buildings, public parks, or during public activities or events. We also support the ability of local governments to set policies regarding the carrying of weapons and firearms by their employees while they are engaged in the course of their employment.



## **Human Services**

### **Support Continued and Expanded Human Service Support\***

Human services in Kansas represent a joint public-private venture requiring adequate levels of city, county, state and federal government investment. We oppose actions by the state that reduce resources or modify programs which would place an increased demand on city and county resources to deal with providing safety net needs to those most vulnerable. Continued support for human services at the State level is imperative in order to keep our communities safe, productive, and vibrant.

## **Other**

### **Maintain Non-Partisan Local Elections\***

The City supports local elections remaining separate from state and national elections. Additionally, we support continuing local elections on a non-partisan basis.

### **Restore Local Control of Right-of-Way for Wireless Facilities\***

Mission supports restoring the ability of local governments to make decisions about the location, placement, size, and appearance of poles, towers and other wireless facilities within the community and public rights-of-way. Working with the wireless industry, local governments should have the ability to avoid the proliferation of unnecessary towers to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Subject to federal law, local governments should be able to establish preferences on the basis of zoning district and type of property.

*\*Items with an asterisk are adapted from the Johnson County Joint Cities platform.*