

2019 Butler County Legislative Agenda

- **Support uniform funding of Community Colleges statewide to equalize the impact from regional institutions.**

County Community Colleges in Kansas are regional learning institutions, serving students from a multi-county area. However, local taxes supporting our Community Colleges are currently levied only in the county where each college is located. This leads to a disproportionate burden on taxpayers of the ‘host’ County, who effectively subsidize educational costs of students from nearby counties. For example, the property tax levied by Butler Community College on Butler County taxpayers adds nearly 60% to the tax levied by the county itself, while nearly 80% of Butler College students reside outside Butler County.

Although out-of-county students pay a modest increment in tuition, the difference is only a fraction of the costs underwritten by Butler County residents, while out-of-county families escape the college mill levy entirely. Additionally, the resulting tax differential between the host county and neighboring counties retards economic and population growth in the host county. This is unfair to host counties like Butler. The legislature should adopt a broad-based funding system that shares costs equitably among those benefitting from our Kansas Community Colleges.

- **Allow Counties to have a position on Abates that occur in their County.**

From time to time the Kansas legislature enacts specific bills granting ad valorem tax exemptions for specific qualifying businesses as a business tax incentive. Local units of governments also have the ability to offer similar incentives through Industrial Revenue bonds or tax exemptions, but the incentives are based upon specific achievement of benchmarks established by local resolution or state requirements. Too often the statutory exemptions enacted by the state conflict with local policy and may be detrimental to specific local governments. Butler County requests legislation allowing counties and cities to be allowed to participate in the abatement process for businesses that are located in their jurisdiction. Specifically local units of government should be allowed to either approve or disapprove pending statutory abatements occurring in their jurisdiction and if abates are granted at the state level local units of government should be compensated for the exemption.

- **Delete statutory language fully exempting alternative energy resources from Ad Valorem taxes.**

Butler County supports legislation that would result in the abolishment of full property tax abatements for alternative energy projects, such as wind farms. As an alternative, Butler County does support legislation that would establish a power production tax levied uniformly across the State on wind energy projects. The new program would eliminate the need for local entities to negotiate gifting or in lieu of agreements from corporations thus establishing a level playing field across the state for all local governments.

- **Property Tax Lid**

Butler County supports continued modifications to the property-tax lid to correct procedures in the tax lid to ensure a practical law for cities and counties. The Legislature needs to continue making modifications to the law which make it more equitable and efficient. Property taxes levied by Kansas counties typically account for well under half of the total property taxes paid by Kansas property owners. However, the property tax lid is imposed only on counties and cities, rather than applying it equally to all taxing entities, such as schools, community colleges, townships, even the State itself. Thus, the County would recommend similar tax lids to all other taxing entities that collect property taxes.