

House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2447

Presented by Staci Williams

Chair of the Kansas Retail Council

Monday, March 13, 2023

My name is Staci Williams and I am the chair of the Kansas Retail Council as well as the owner of Petland Topeka. I have been a small business owner in Topeka, Kansas since February 2009 and have worked actively within our community to assist with the growth and development of businesses within Topeka in efforts to build a strong, locally-based economy.

Limitations and bans placed on licensed and regulated businesses by municipalities is a detrimental move not only for the businesses in question, but also for the economies and individuals of the communities they are within. The loss of functioning, profitable businesses due to municipality limitations causes a tax burden both locally and on a state level due to the loss of sales tax revenues. The loss of this income would directly impact the quality of streets and infrastructure, public services like police and fire departments, and community outreach.

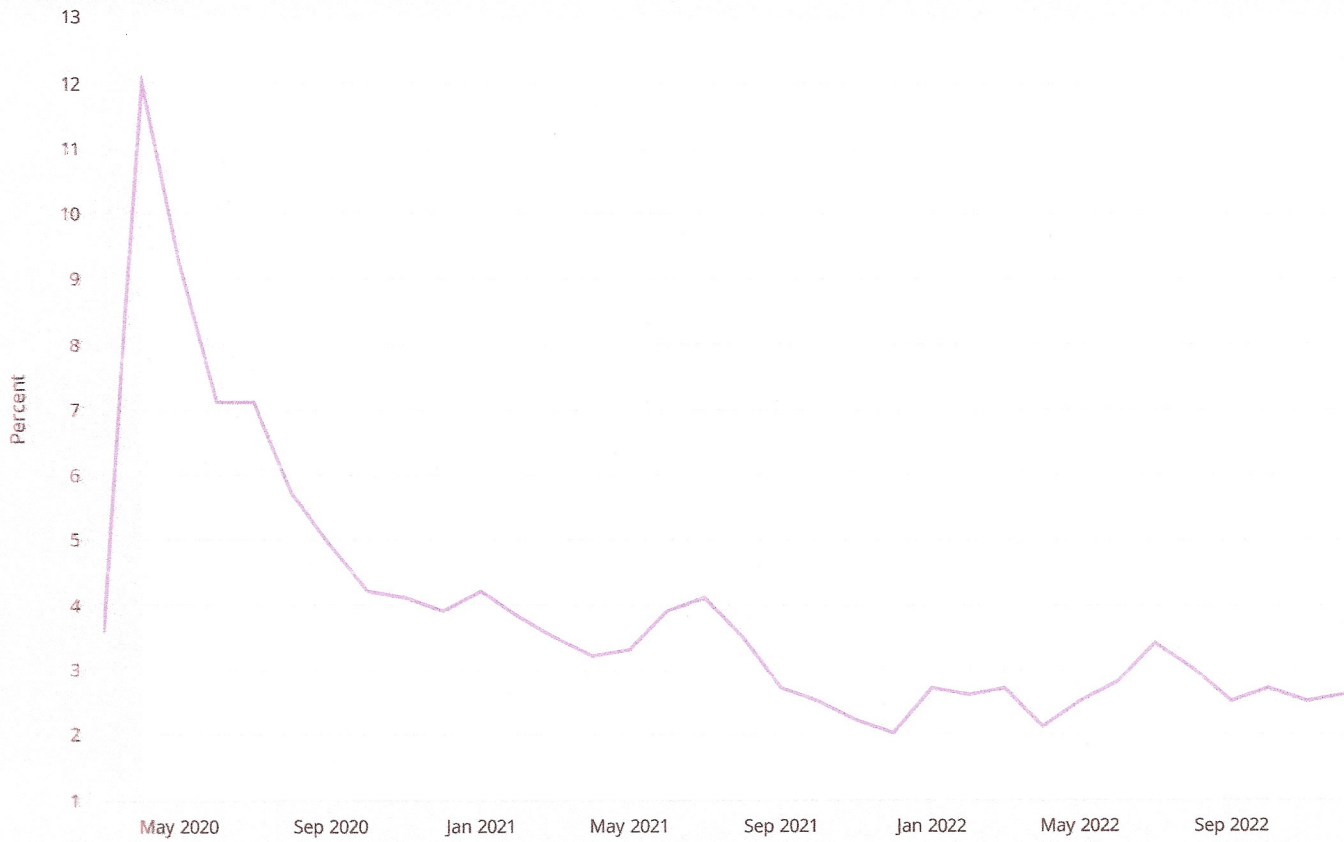
In addition to the loss of sales tax, closure of businesses due to municipality bans also cause a mass loss of jobs within their communities. As of December 2022, Kansas has recovered from its recent all time high unemployment rate of 12%. In April of 2020, not only has it recovered, it has remained below 3% for the majority of 2022. Closure of businesses directly leads to the increase of unemployment rates which can increase defaults on loan payments resulting in transportation and housing crises, an increase in the need for government assisted medicaid programs like KanCare, food programs like SNAP and WIC, and a general increase in poverty levels within the state. Needless to say, the decrease in income tax revenue due to missed wages mixed with the increase in utilization in state funded aid to compensate for nonexistent income is not a remunerative combination.

Small businesses are an essential monetary cornerstone in any local economy, putting money directly back into their city and state communities through paychecks and taxes, while also reducing the burden on the state to provide tax-funded resources and support for unemployed individuals. There is no sensible reason that a lucrative, maintained and regulated business that is meeting its state's standards of operation should be banned from conducting business on a municipality level.

Sincerely,



Staci Williams



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

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