



**Overland  
Park  
Chamber™**

**To: Senator Molly Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Education Committee**  
**From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy**  
**Overland Park Chamber of Commerce**  
**Date: 23 March 2021**

On behalf of the members of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2287.

For many years there has been an emphasis on graduating high school seniors being directed toward a four-year degree. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that path and for many students it is the right path. However, not all students are prepared for the rigors of a specialized degree and for others it simply is not the direction they want to go.

With the emphasis placed on four-year degrees many have lost sight that a career in technical and skilled trades can be challenging and rewarding. We believe HB 2287 is a step toward restoring balance and incenting students to pursue a career path in the skilled and technical trades.

Numerous studies and reports highlight findings that show that advanced skills and specialized training will be necessary to remain competitive in the job market as we advance through the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A Pew research study found that 87% of workers recognized that advanced training and development of high-tech skills would be important and necessary for success in their career path.

Whenever business leaders gather the discussion invariably turns to problems associated with workforce shortages and the increasing demand for skilled labor. While this bill won't solve every problem associated with workforce needs, it does represent a valuable tool that is sure to provide some degree of relief.

Offering students an attractive option to embark on a rewarding career while simultaneously addressing a major need of the business community creates a win-win solution for everyone. We applaud the authors of the bill and encourage this committee to act favorably on HB 2287.