



**Overland
Park
Chamber™**

To: Representative Sean Tarwater and Members of the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

**From: Kevin Walker, Senior Vice President of Public Policy
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce**

Date: 22 February 2021

On behalf of the members of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2351.

It will come as no surprise to this committee that the Overland Park Chamber is engaged in daily conversations with business leaders throughout our community. A common theme during these conversations is the persistent concern that our workforce faces a shortage of qualified workers to fill vital jobs. Historically low unemployment numbers and the increased demand for highly skilled workers are leading factors contributing to the shortage.

The Johnson County school districts are at the forefront of preparing students for in-demand career paths that will drive our future economy. A key component of these programs is engaging students in real-world, hands-on experiences that extend beyond the classroom.

We believe one barrier to these tremendously valuable programs is the concern expressed by business owners regarding liability. HB 2351 helps clarify responsibilities when it comes to engaging secondary students in off-site work-based training experiences in a manner that appears fair to all involved.

We support HB 2351 and encourage the committee to recommend it favorably for passage.