

**State of the City 2016  
Mayor Sly James  
Tuesday, March 29, 2016**

**Good morning everyone, and welcome to the Uptown Theater.**

**I would especially like to welcome those of you here today who serve in an elective office.**

**I am thrilled that all of you are with me and with Kansas City today -- and I note Missouri State Treasurer Clint Zweifel is here all the way from Jefferson City.**

**If you are an elected official, please stand and let us recognize you for your service.**

**Take a moment and think back to 2011, when I took office.**

**I was less gray, more rested, and I had inherited a city that was stagnant.**

**Back then, Kansas City was in the doldrums.**

**Citizen satisfaction surveys were hitting lows.**

**Local business survey results were the same, and we had a nationwide reputation of being closed for business.**

**Downtown was only starting to crawl out of a decades-long downturn.**

**The recession was continuing, and the subprime mortgage crisis was rearing its ugly head, especially on Kansas City's east side.**

**Cerner and Sporting KC abandoned their plans to develop offices and a soccer stadium where Bannister Mall once stood. Instead, they went to Wyandotte County.**

**Frankly, there just wasn't a lot of good news or things that made us very proud.**

**Then, stuff started to happen.**

**In 2011, Google Fiber chose both Kansas Cities as the first cities for its new gigabit Fiber.**

**People around the country starting talking about Kansas City.**

**“Why Kansas City?” “What makes Kansas City so special?” “Why would Google go there?”**

**All of a sudden, we had a reason to start telling anyone who asked -- or anyone who would listen -- about our city.**

**This new notoriety -- and all the press and tweets that went with it -- gave us a new way to tell the Kansas City story.**

**The momentum started, and our collective attitude began to change.**

**People started to feel a sense of pride in Kansas City, and people around the country became more curious about what had until then been flyover country to them.**

**Tech entrepreneurs discovered that Kansas City was a great place to “start up.”**

**They moved here just to plug in to Google Fiber’s gigabit connectivity.**

**Many of those startups were run by millennials with different attitudes about the collisions between jobs, careers, lifestyles and families than their Baby Boomer parents.**

**A new energy started to build in the community.**

**The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts opened in late 2011 and immediately injected new life into the west side of downtown.**

**Major League Baseball brought the 2012 All-Star Game to Kansas City.**

**And we showed out!**

**People from around the world and the country here for the first time said, “I had no idea.”**

**They wrote letters to the editor, tweets and Facebook posts praising our city and our family of citizens.**

**We got started on the Leon Mercer Jordan Police Campus on the east side.**

**And in late 2012, voters approved the KC Streetcar linking River Market with Union Station, and we got to work.**

**Construction cranes started reaching for the sky shortly thereafter, many of them along the Streetcar route.**

**The Streetcar also gave us the chance to replace 2.2 miles of water and sewer lines, -- some of it from the 1880s -- which had caused flooding in the central business district for years.**

**In the process, we created a spine for a whole new tech infrastructure called Smart + Connected City, which we will proudly open when the Streetcar starts rolling down Main Street with the street party to top all street parties on May 6-7.**

**And best of all, we gave our psyche a boost.**

**Momentum continued to build.**

**“KC” started to appear on shirts, caps, mugs, socks, ties, beer and virtually everything that entrepreneurs could print it on.**

**Visitors from across the metro area and the region came here to enjoy our city’s great cultural and entertainment offerings:**

**The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art was rated the top museum in the nation based Yelp reviews.**

**The National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial is number 5 on the same list.**

**The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum in the 18th & Vine Jazz District; Sprint Center, KC Live and much, much more.**

**And the good feeling and growth wasn't just downtown.**

**The city's housing stock emerged from an eight-year federal receivership in 2013, and we finished the long-awaited Beacon Hill residential development.**

**New student housing and streetscape improvements transformed the face of Troost between Hospital Hill and Beacon Hill.**

**Bannister Mall was cleared, and Cerner returned and started work on a new campus that will ultimately be home to 16,000 jobs.**

**We cut the ribbon on the Twin Creeks infrastructure in the Northland, which already is sprouting new development.**

**And the Royals got better, too.**

**The All-Star Game was just a warm-up for even bigger parties: Two World Series appearances and a Championship that included a parade and a rally that brought 800,000 people downtown without incident.**

**Like our World Series Champion Royals, we've got momentum, and we're keeping the line moving.**

**We're able to do so in part because of leaders who made tough decisions a generation or more ago.**

**Those leaders took bold steps to address big issues in order to make Kansas City better.**

**Fifty years ago, when the city was floundering financially, city leaders decided that an earnings tax was a fair and equitable financial foundation to stabilize the great city we enjoy today.**

**Those leaders 50 years ago weren't just focused on day-to-day problems.**

**They were building a city for the future, just as we are obliged to do for our children and grandchildren.**

**Momentum does not build, and greatness does not occur, when we are satisfied with short-term, quick-fix solutions rather than catalytic approaches that spur long-term growth.**

**This city -- any city that wants to be the best it can be for citizens -- must remain focused on the future and recognize we are all part of one great Kansas City.**

**The 4E agenda I ran on before I took office in 2011 -- Efficiency, Employment, Education, and Enforcement -- remains our focus today because it serves as a framework that can sustain Kansas City momentum in the future.**

### **Efficiency**

**Across the street from City Hall is a bronze statue of Illus Davis, the mayor who in 1963 appointed the original Citizens Commission on Municipal Revenue that conceived the earnings tax.**

**Anita Gorman helped establish this tax back in '63 and saw first hand what the State of our City was then.**

### **Anita Gorman video.**

**The earnings tax wasn't a new idea. Lots of cities had it then, and over 4,000 cities and governmental bodies have it now.**

**The earnings tax works because city residents and people who work in the city share in the cost of operating the city.**

**Residents tell us in the annual survey that one of the most important city services is the overall quality of public safety.**

**So a big chunk of the general fund logically goes to public safety -- police, fire and ambulance services.**

**Another important point is that half the earnings tax is paid by people who work in the city but live outside Kansas City.**

**They win, too.**

**Kansas City public safety officials help save lives all across the region through mutual aid agreements, the resources of the Regional Police Academy, the Fire Department's HAZMAT team and much more.**

**Four area mayors -- Mayor Carson Ross of Blue Springs, and three others here today: Mayor Randy Rhoads of Lee's Summit and Mayor Eileen Weir of Independence and Mayor Mark Holland of Kansas City, Kansas -- understand this and support the earnings tax.**

**Thank you, mayors, for your support. The voters will have their say next Tuesday, April 5th.**

**The entire Kansas City area loses without the earnings tax.**

**What would it take to fully replace the earnings tax?**

**We would need a combination of massive tax increases -- or a massive increase in a single tax source, like a doubling of sales taxes or tripling property taxes -- to fully replace the \$230 million that the earnings tax generates today.**

**To cut our way to \$230 million, we'd need to lay off more than 200 employees a year over the next 10 years, more than half of which would be police officers and firefighters.**

**That would be on top of the 675 non-public safety workers we've already trimmed from the city workforce since 2008.**

**When I reconstituted the Citizens Commission on Municipal Revenue in 2011, the group found that the earnings tax is STILL the only viable option.**

**Plus, we are more transparent and accountable today than we have ever been.**

**Businesses appreciate that we run Kansas City using data, facts and evidence to give our customers -- taxpayers, residents, visitors and companies -- what they expect.**

**In a survey of 430 businesses taken late last year by the EDC, 70 percent rated Kansas City as an “excellent” or “good” place to do business.**

**Tom Trabon, who passed away last month, started that survey several years ago, and it’s a wonderful legacy for the city he loved.**

**The EDC business survey mirrors the positive momentum from the city’s annual citizen satisfaction survey.**

**80 percent of citizens give us high marks as a place to live, 71 percent the same as a place to work, and 59 percent rate us high as a place to raise children.**

**The marks are up significantly from both 10 years ago, and five years ago when I took office.**

**In order to keep driving efficiency, we hold departmental KC Stat meetings every month, as we have done for the past five years.**

**These meetings dive into the performances of a different department each month.**

**We have productive discussions with the committed professionals who run our city.**

**Using the data, they tell us what they’re doing now -- and what they need to do next -- to keep the momentum going and to continue spending taxpayer money wisely.**

**Speaking of which: Last Thursday, the City Council passed the \$1.53 billion budget for 2016-17.**

**That budget supports our neighborhoods and our young people. We’ll be able to demolish dangerous buildings and invest more in summer youth employment.**

**Public safety departments will now comprise 75 percent of our \$543 million general fund, 40 percent of which comes from the earnings tax.**

**That leaves 25 percent for things like streets, sidewalks, snow removal, trash pick-up, codes enforcement and municipal court.**

**And that means we'll continue to have some difficult budget decisions to make.**

**That doesn't scare me or make me uncomfortable. If I wanted to be loved every day, I would've open a pet store. But I wanted to lead, so I ran for Mayor.**

**It seems to me that if we are guided by facts and data, not politics or ideology, then decisions are usually pretty clear, which brings me to the airport.**

**Doing nothing is not an option for another critical part of Kansas City: the passenger terminals at Kansas City International Airport.**

**Modernization is needed now if we're going to meet the present and future needs of the airlines who serve us and end long restroom lines inside security, improve baggage handling and de-icing equipment, meet the modern expectations of airline passengers, and deal with the crumbling infrastructure underneath.**

**The airlines, a citizens committee I appointed, and our city staff have been looking at this issue in excruciating detail for more than two years.**

**We'll get a recommendation from the airlines in a few weeks so that KCI -- the front door of our community -- will be as inviting and efficient as we are making the rest of the city today.**

**Our airline partners -- led by Southwest -- are singing the praises of Kansas City for the collaborative way we're doing this because the airlines and airport operations -- not citizen taxes -- will pay for whatever happens at the airport.**

**Another way we are improving city efficiency is a public-private partnership that helps us support an important part of the city's talent base.**

**Women's Empowerment, or WE, is an initiative that ensures that women can bring their talents to the city and to the wider community.**

**Through WE, and for the first time, city employees will be eligible for paid parental leave beginning this spring.**

**And later this year, WE is joining with the Women's Foundation and the Society of Human Resource Management to conduct When Work Works, a program aimed at improving work-life balance throughout the city.**



Let's hear from Wendy Doyle of the Women's Foundation.

### **Wendy Doyle video.**

**WE empowers women in many ways and creates a culture that makes Kansas City an even better place for women and families to live and work.**

**But, efficiency isn't just a bricks and mortar thing. It's a people thing, too.**

**And that means jobs.**

### **Employment**

**Kansas City momentum is especially evident in our ability to attract new people through job opportunities and our strategic assets.**

**The new, 800-room downtown convention center hotel is a more traditional job generator and a huge asset.**

**This hotel has been years in the making because this deal had to be right for the whole city.**

**And it is. Our general fund is NOT on the hook for the convention hotel. The new hotel will need about 1,500 construction workers over two years.**

**And when it's done, hundreds of people will be needed to run the hotel -- everybody from managers and desk clerks to bartenders and waitstaff.**

**More importantly, the hotel is a key to bringing thousands of visitors to Kansas City, meaning more business for restaurants, museums, night clubs, art galleries and visitor attractions.**

**Thanks to the outstanding efforts of Visit KC -- millions of tourist and convention dollars are heading our way, even before groundbreaking.**

**Shriners, associations and major sports events that need large blocks of rooms have agreed to come here.**

**Many more conventions are checking us out, including several groups that previously left Kansas City because we didn't have enough hotel rooms in close proximity to the Convention Center.**

**So the future is good, but that will change if the Missouri General Assembly passes Senate Joint Resolution 39.**

**If SJR 39 becomes law, VisitKC estimates the total economic impact at risk to Kansas City could be as much as \$5.6 billion, including more than \$200 million from 20 sport groups alone that are currently scheduled to come here in 2017 and beyond.**

**With all the momentum we're enjoying and the popularity that Kansas City has nationwide, now is not the time for state lawmakers to shut the door on billions of tourist dollars.**

**Much has been said in recent months about incentives. Much of it has been misguided or completely false.**

**Here are some truths:**

**Since TIF was introduced as an economic development tool over 25 years ago, we estimate that property values in these early incentivized areas of Jackson County have more than doubled.**

**Additionally, these investments allowed us to make needed public infrastructure improvements and create hundreds of construction and other jobs to redevelop these properties.**

**64% of new development projects since 2011 did not receive any local incentives.**

**Let's also talk about the facts regarding development on the east side of Kansas City.**

**Since 2011, we've invested over \$2 billion in housing, infrastructure and capital improvements in the area east of Troost, south of the river, and north of 63rd Street.**

**Part of that investment includes more than \$41 million in public capital improvements.**

**Housing, economic and public facilities -- projects like Beacon Hill, St. Michael's Veterans' Center, Bancroft School Affordable Housing, Oak Point Apartments, Faxon School Apartments on the Paseo, Highland Avenue Apartments in the 18th and Vine area, Phil Curls Senior Housing at 52nd and Mersington and more -- added more than \$156 million into east side investment.**

**The \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Grant is a major boost for the Paseo Gateway northeast neighborhood.**

**It will improve the lives of residents in many ways: Housing, education, social services, transportation, infrastructure upgrades, economic development and reducing the digital divide.**

**The \$14 million Kansas City Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy will use the game of baseball to help thousands of kids, ages 6-18, develop character along with leadership, job and athletic skills.**

**Special thanks to all who have stepped up to build the academy, especially my friend and Royals General Manager Dayton Moore, Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, and the Glass family.**

**This project would still be in the idea stage without big time assists from people like Kyle Vena, Royals' Director of Baseball Administration; several generous Royals players, Carolyn Watley and her fundraising committee, the Kansas City Sports Commission, Populous, and VML, who created Relay the Way, our longest-opening day-first-pitch event.**

**This Sunday, Royals fans will pick up where we left off last fall - at Union Station. They'll throw and catch a ball all the way to the stadiums and the biggest winner will be our kids, because proceeds go to the Kansas City Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy.**

**The city is also making a direct, million-dollar-plus investment in Linwood Shopping Center, proving that we will do whatever we can to drive investment to neighborhoods that need it the most.**

**We also proposed the Shared Success Fund, another way to channel the benefits of development deals to the most economically distressed areas of the city, most of which are on the east side.**

**Here's one perspective from a long-time east-side resident I know well: my barber.**

**video testimonial.**

**And other development is starting to bloom all over Kansas City. In the past year, we cut the ribbon on the Twin Creeks sewer expansion, a \$43 million infrastructure investment that opened up 13,000 acres of land for future development in Kansas City's Northland.**

**In south Kansas City, warehousing and transportation businesses continue to find a home near Kansas City Southern's intermodal facility, a place that solidifies Kansas City as a transportation hub and the logistical crossroads of the nation.**

**And so has our growing reputation for technological innovation and entrepreneurship.**

**With Google Fiber and Smart + Connected City, Kansas City has at its fingertips the economic infrastructure of the 21st century.**

**That type of infrastructure makes Kansas City attractive to all types of people with all kinds of ideas.**

**A person with an idea - that's the economy of the future. Not big box development rooted in billions of dollars of incentives.**

**And because of that, we strongly support programs like Launch KC.**

**Last year, the first 10 LaunchKC grant recipients received half a million dollars -- \$50,000 each -- by winning a business competition that drew applicants from around the world.**

**We're not stopping. Applications for Launch KC 2016 will be accepted beginning this Friday.**

**We look forward to TechWeek in September, when 10 more grants will be awarded.**

**Kansas City's tech momentum ramped up this month when we turned on our kiosks and wifi.**

**Already, our Smart + Connected City ecosystem in partnership with Cisco, Sprint and others is helping make us a finalist city for a \$50 million Department of Transportation Smart City grant.**

**Our tech companies need more trained help -- people who can manage the flow of information and data, write code, fix equipment and implement creative ideas.**

**And lots of people in our city need jobs, or better-paying jobs, to support their families.**

**The White House TechHire program helps people develop their tech job skills and then helps them land apprenticeships that blossom into permanent employment.**

**Many thanks to Clyde McQueen and the Full Employment Council and several other groups for collaborating on TechHire.**

**Beyond training, residents need to be connected to take full advantage of the tech jobs coming our way.**

**That's one benefit of being part of HUD initiatives like ConnectHome and ConnectED that bring high-speed broadband to families and students in public housing.**

**Many partners -- public and private -- are working together to make sure we sustain the momentum that Google Fiber kick-started just five years ago and enable residents to get fully trained and fully employed.**

**Of course, in order to have well-trained adults in our future workforce holding good-paying jobs, we have to make sure Kansas City kids have a quality education.**

**Education**

## **Education video**

**I love reading to kids; It's one of the highlights of my days as mayor.**

**I have read to kids in over 100 schools since 2011 and each time I have seen first hand the great energy and momentum that's happening in Kansas City Schools.**

**I'm hearing less complacent or excuse-ridden language about why some of our schools are not performing well.**

**And I'm hearing more adults say that we need to do more to ensure all kids succeed regardless of where they live or the color of their skin.**

**We have schools that are NOT lowering the expectation bar for kids, but instead providing additional supports to help kids achieve at high levels.**

**Supports like City Year and Literacy Lab.**

**Through City Year, 17 AmeriCorps members work closely with students in Central Middle School and Kauffman School, keeping them on track to graduate by improving their attendance, behavior and course performance.**

**And Literacy Lab has 22 trained literacy tutors in six elementary schools and three Head Start centers, focused solely on growing children's literacy confidence and ability.**

**Both City Year and Literacy Lab will more than double the number of kids they support next school year.**

**That's momentum in the right direction!**

**Turn the Page KC, an organization I formed in my first days of office, has created tremendous momentum around Third Grade reading proficiency.**

**Turn the Page KC was recognized earlier this month by the National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading as a Pacesetter program, sweeping all the award categories.**

**Out of 180 communities, only six communities accomplished such an achievement and Kansas City was one of them.**

**And that's because the hardworking individuals at Turn the Page KC, from our Board of Directors and excellent staff to the classroom volunteers, who roll up their sleeves and get to work every single day for our young people.**

**Turn the Page KC convened a summit to address attendance issues faced by highly mobile students.**

**We hosted more than 1,000 kids at a summer reading festival at the Sprint Center and gave away over 300,000 books with help from LINC and First Book.**

**And we created a school readiness social media campaign called Dads Turn the Page and put books in barbershops to support fathers in being their child's first and best teacher.**

**So we have some positive momentum in education, but there is still much more to do.**

**We need to do more to make sure every child in Kansas City lives near a quality school.**

**Right now, the distribution of quality schools across the city is inequitable.**

**The green dots on the map show where they are.**

**Four out of five schools that are located in affluent areas are considered high quality.**

**Yet, only one in five schools located in the distressed areas are considered high quality.**

**This is neither right, nor acceptable.**

**We as a community must apply pressure and get momentum going to increase access to quality schools for every child - regardless of their zip code.**

**I'm willing to listen to any idea on how we can make access to quality schools easier and fairer.**

**And I will support anyone who improves or adds more quality schools in these target areas.**

**Quality schools revitalize neighborhoods, which is why every citizen should support their public schools.**

**Be sure to vote next Tuesday, April 5th if you live in a district holding board elections. For kids to get the education they deserve, school districts should be governed by a board of highly effective, visionary leaders.**

**Quality schools will be within our grasp when we have awesome teachers in every classroom in every building.**

**Teachers shape the future generations of this City. With such a tremendous responsibility, they should be highly trained and deeply supported.**

**Which is why I like the Kansas City Teacher Residency.**

**It trains teachers just like we train doctors -- through a residency model.**

**It's a model that works.**

**Nationwide, residency graduates outperform their peers in student achievement and overall teacher performance.**

**And more than 80 percent of residency graduates are still teaching in the classroom after three years, compared to roughly half of traditionally trained teachers.**

**Kansas City Teacher Residency aims for half of its residents to be persons of color -- a much needed goal since only 5 percent of teachers in Missouri are persons of color.**

**Every child deserves a quality school in their neighborhood, and a quality teacher in their classroom. They also deserve quality opportunities when they're not in school.**

**Youth in this City should be safe from violence, connected to caring adults, inspired to pursue their passions, and ready for the workforce.**

**However, access to these types of opportunities are just as inequitably distributed as quality schools.**



**So, we created Mayor's Nights and Club KC summer programming and the Hire KC Youth initiative.**

**Employing young people in meaningful summer jobs sets them on the path to be lifelong learners and contributors to our City.**

**Hire KC Youth is hosting a job fair on April 16th.**

**I ask businesses large and small to please join the City in hiring KC youth this summer.**

**You can contact Chantell Garrett in my office to discuss how you can help.**

**Earlier this month, Kansas City got the good news that we are a pilot community for LRNG. That stands for learning, in case you're fading...**

**LRNG connects youth to in-school, out-of-school, employer-based and online learning experiences that align with their interests and passions.**

**For example, our young people may test their ideas at a Maker meetup, learn to code at a local library, or hone their creative writing skills at a poetry slam at a nearby coffee shop.**

**Yes, we've made positive momentum when it comes to increasing educational opportunities for our young people.**

**Nothing can change a child's life like a quality education.**

### **Enforcement**

**Nothing we've done to improve efficiency, to boost employment or to educate our kids means anything if our citizens aren't safe.**

**We can't expect entrepreneurs to embrace our City of Innovation if they feel unsafe to grow their ideas here.**

**We can't expect businesses to stay here -- or move here -- if their employees or products are at risk.**

**And we can't expect families to raise their kids here if our schools, parks and neighborhoods aren't safe.**

**Police and firefighters put their lives on the line every day to ensure our safety.**

**Two of those firefighters -- Larry Leggio and John Mesh -- lost their lives in the line of duty last October, fighting a fire in the neighborhood where they grew up.**

**They loved their families, and they loved this city.**

**Please join me now in a moment of silence honoring the memory and service of our fallen firefighters, Larry Leggio and John Mesh.**

**[Moment of silence]**

**If we can't protect our kids from being gunned down in the streets, or even in their very own homes, all the momentum we're feeling as a city comes to a screeching halt.**

**We owe it to our children to do more.**

**We owe it to 17-year-old Shannon Rollins Jr., 17-year-old Bianca Fletcher and her 1-year-old son, Joseph, all of whom were murdered in their home in September.**

**We owe it to 3-year-old Amorian Hale, who was sleeping in his bed when his life was cut short by a bullet fired into his home last May.**

**And we owe it to the six other kids who were under the age of 16 when their lives were claimed by violence this past year. It's our collective duty to protect them.**

**KC NoVA is sustaining the momentum of using better and more coordinated intelligence to focus our resources on the very small number of individuals who cause most of the violent crime in Kansas City.**

**And I want to give a special shout out to the NoVA Governing Board members and their commitment to ending violence in Kansas City.**

**NoVA partners work together closely to keep our citizens safe, and I cannot thank this group enough for the work that they do.**

**I want to especially thank Chief Darryl Forte and Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker who both understood that changing the way their departments were organized could yield better results.**

**This approach works. And we're proud of what we're doing. And I'm continually inspired by the work of our partners, especially Rosilyn Temple of Mothers In Charge.**

### **Rosilyn video.**

**Even as homicides rose last year compared with 2014, group-related homicides held relatively steady and remained significantly lower than 2013.**

**We know other issues -- domestic violence and child abuse -- were at the heart of the 2015 uptick in homicides.**

**We will continually update our implementation of NoVA by focusing on high-risk teens with programs like Teens in Transition, or TNT.**

**TNT is NoVA's 10-week summertime program at ArtsTech where we work with at-risk youth, many of whom were referred by school resource officers or teachers.**

**Some previously had negative contact with law enforcement.**

**Others missed multiple days of school, or they might have been suspended on a regular basis.**

**And some were associated with violent individuals or negative influences.**

**While in TNT, young people are expected to show up, work hard on a community art project and take responsibility for their lives.**

**The growth of these teens is truly amazing.**

**Many of these teens now are on their way to high school graduation and are looking into college or technical trade training.**

**Yearly results prove that TNT works. Kids respond when given opportunities to succeed by people who believe in them.**

**While NoVA has made overall gains on group violence, it is still increasingly difficult to reduce the number of illegal guns flooding our urban streets.**

**But I, and many other mayors across the nation, are frustrated because state and federal laws tie the hands of cities when it comes to any sort of meaningful method of gun control.**

**Last October, a Politico magazine survey found that 89 percent of mayors believe Congress is doing too little to address gun violence.**

**I will continue to call for common sense legislation at the State level that can coexist with the Second Amendment, starting with an armed offender docket pilot program in our courts.**

**I want to recognize Representative Kevin Corlew for introducing this important legislation -- and for consistently supporting this effort.**

**He exercised leadership on this subject by supporting legislation based on common sense and facts and data -- not political rhetoric.**

**I look forward to joining him again in Jefferson City next week for the hearing on this important bill.**

**With a system in place to make sure justice is swift, criminals might think twice before doing something tragic and cruel, like take the life of a sleeping toddler.**

**Kansas City must reduce violence so that everyone here -- and everyone who wants to be here -- will be safe at home, at work and in the community.**

### **Conclusion**

**Efficiency, employment, education and enforcement formed the framework for my run for mayor five years ago, and again last year.**

**It is the platform we use to bring people together, to change our city's trajectory and to start and sustain the momentum of civic pride and progress we enjoy today.**

**That momentum only continues, though, with careful planning and impeccable execution focused on the city of the future.**

**So it is more than important -- it is absolutely critical -- that we continue to build on this momentum.**

**That means making decisions that benefit the entire community, based on facts and data; and implementing those decisions in a fair and balanced way.**

**It also means retaining the earnings tax, which plays a vital role in keeping the momentum going.**

**Now is not the time to disrupt the success and the momentum of our city with misguided attempts to change a basic funding mechanism.**

**Businesses large and small and citizens from all corners of the city like the results.**

**That's true because Kansas City is reawakening unlike anytime in recent memory.**

**I pledge to continue to work hard for the city I love. And I remain undeterred in my resolve to make this city best -- not just for us today, but for our kids and grandkids.**

**As I look ahead, I will work as hard as necessary to leave this city not only better than I found it, but the envy of cities nationwide and worldwide.**

**My friends, the state of our city is full of momentum and pride, and I refuse to let it slow down.**

**I thank you for supporting our efforts, and I thank you for being here with me today.**