

# Kansas Chamber, go away



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Steve Rose

The Kansas Chamber of Commerce needs to stay out of Johnson County. And they can take Americans for Prosperity with them.

The chamber is not a “pro-business” organization. That is a ruse.

It is a lobbying group with one, and only one, priority: lowering taxes.

To that end, they, along with Americans for Prosperity – Kansas chapter -- recruit and fund candidates to unseat incumbents who don’t see things their way.

In this upcoming primary election, in our county they have gone after State Sen. Terrie Huntington, State Rep. Sheryl Spalding, and State Rep. Jill Quigley.

Why?

Because they dared to vote for a one-cent tax increase that plugged a \$300 million deficit that otherwise would have meant sizable teacher layoffs, cuts in K-12 programming, and no funds for highway construction.

Go to any website of any Chamber of Commerce (and we did check dozens), and you will virtually always find a bucolic scene of the community represented with a sales pitch for the city or state.

But not on the Kansas Chamber website. No, there you are smacked in the head with these words: “The 2010 elections present an unprecedented opportunity to place pro-business candidates into office in Topeka.”

But what does pro-business mean, anyway?

To the Kansas Chamber, it means tax cuts, and that’s all it means.

To the more enlightened Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, it means more than that. And the OP Chamber said so in a recent letter to the Kansas Chamber.

“It is no secret that the legislative agendas of our two organizations have some fundamental differences,” it stated.

The letter goes on to say: “Our membership has been very direct with us. They want excellent and relevant educational opportunities for their children and future workforce, a transportation system that is efficient and well-maintained, and social services that direct resources where they are most vitally needed.”

In other words, higher taxes may be necessary to be really pro-business, because being pro-business means more than tax rates. It means a total quality of life that attracts businesses.

The tag team of The Kansas Chamber and Americans for Prosperity has recruited candidates, and now is spending large sums in our local races.

Their “soft money” attacks are ugly. They will stoop to any level to go after an incumbent they want defeated.

It is imperative we send them this message: We are capable of making up our own minds, and we don’t need your heavy-handed, myopic tactics intruding into our local politics.