



2019 Legislative Agenda

Pennsylvania has abundant natural resources, geographic advantages and first rate educational and training institutions that are attractive to employers and help companies compete with their counterparts in other states and around the world. We urge lawmakers to pursue a public policy agenda that complements these advantages, builds on the existing talent in our workforce, and helps improve the Commonwealth's business climate, thereby encouraging job growth and economic prosperity.

Responsible state spending and smart government

The PA Chamber urges the legislature and Governor to work collaboratively toward enactment of a responsible, on-time state budget. While significant financial pressures continue to complicate state finances and budget deliberations, we strongly believe that all opportunities for cost-savings and more efficient spending should be exhausted before new or higher taxes are considered. While the PA Chamber applauded passage of Act 5 of 2017 to begin reforming the state pension systems, it is clear more must be done to fairly address their unfunded liabilities and provide for long-term solvency. The PA Chamber also supports efforts to identify opportunities to utilize public-private partnerships and consider privatizing government services that could be more efficiently conducted by the private sector.

Improve the business tax structure

Policymakers should look to reforming and aligning the Commonwealth's tax structure with the recent pro-growth initiatives enacted at the federal level. Our corporate net income tax rate must be reduced in order for our employers to prosper in a global economy. The PA Chamber will advocate for comprehensive changes to the state tax structure that embody the principles of competitiveness, predictability, fairness and simplicity. These changes include addressing the manner by which local taxes are levied and administered.

Affordable and accessible health care

High health-care costs remain an impediment for many businesses who wish to offer or maintain appropriate health-care benefits to their employees either through traditional coverage or alternative options in the marketplace. A high level of quality care and accessibility for employees must be made available at reasonable and affordable prices without undue regulatory burden and bureaucracy. The PA Chamber will continue to advocate for policies that will encourage competition in the provision of healthcare while also giving employers the most flexibility when making health care decisions.

Flexibility in energy markets and science-based environmental requirements

Numerous state and federal environmental regulations and energy mandates are hindering the state's economic positions. The PA Chamber opposes the imposition of new, and the expansion of existing, mandates and will continue to advocate for thoughtful, science-based development and flexible implementation of environmental law.

Creating an equitable civil justice system

Pennsylvania's legal climate is conducive to frivolous lawsuits and lacks protections that create a fair, balanced and common sense civil litigation system. The business community supports legal reforms that help prevent lawsuit abuse while protecting the right of legitimate plaintiffs to seek justice. The PA Chamber supports lawsuit abuse reform proposals that provide for full and timely compensation of parties legitimately injured; give employers predictability and certainty; change the judicial system to achieve greater efficiencies and unbiased justice; and contribute to greater productivity and economic prosperity.

Modern, safe, efficient and reliable infrastructure systems

Pennsylvania must construct and maintain adequately funded and reliable transportation and utility systems and other infrastructure. The PA Chamber will continue to advocate for greater efficiencies in their construction, maintenance and delivery, including streamlined permit and regulatory processes. The business community supports expanded reliance on public-private partnerships to help the Commonwealth meet its infrastructure needs in a manner consistent with the imperative for fiscal restraints.

Balanced labor and employment laws and regulations

State policies that govern labor relations and employment rules in Pennsylvania often fail to consider adverse impacts on employers. The PA Chamber supports public policy that helps facilitate a fair work environment without triggering unintended consequences that hurt employers. The business community supports eliminating misuse and improving the financial condition of the unemployment compensation system; and facilitating a workers' compensation system that roots out abuse and, most importantly, focuses on returning injured workers to full health and function. Employers oppose excessive mandates and artificial wage inflators that unnecessarily increase the cost of doing business. In addition, Pennsylvania law still forces individuals in the private sector to pay dues to a union as a condition of employment and allows public resources to be used for collecting union dues and political contributions. The PA Chamber supports the prohibition of both practices.

Quality educational opportunities

The PA Chamber supports a public education system based on rigorous standards, with appropriate transparency and robust accountability measures, to help ensure Pennsylvania students graduate high school as prepared as possible for the next phase of their lives. The PA Chamber further supports initiatives that help provide families with options to best fit the specific education needs of students.

Approved by the Policy Subcommittee on November 12, 2018

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