



2011 – 2012 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

PRIORITY ITEMS

Transportation Funding: The Chamber supports establishment of long-term, dedicated sources of adequate funding for construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.

Workforce Development: The Chamber supports education and training programs that develop a workforce possessing the skills needed to conduct all types of business in an efficient and productive manner.

Early Childhood Investment: The Chamber supports investment in early childhood programs that enhance the opportunity for children to be able to realize the benefits of K-12 education.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The Chamber supports efforts to ensure that Virginia maintains a favorable business climate and policies that encourage business opportunities and investment.
- The Chamber supports aggressive, well-funded economic development and workforce development efforts.
- The Chamber supports reasonable policies that encourage the establishment and growth of small businesses.
- The Chamber supports policies focused on job creation.

SPECIFIC POLICY POSITIONS

- **Economic Development & Business Growth**
 - Business Development
 - The Chamber supports fully funding the Governor's Opportunity Fund and other business development incentive funds.
 - Technology & Research
 - The Chamber supports funding for research that will create more high-tech related jobs, foster a high-technology economy and increase scientific literacy.
 - Broadband Technology
 - The Chamber supports policies that encourage private sector investment leading to universal access to broadband communication through the use of all available technologies, including wireless, fiber optics and cable.
 - Tourism, Cultural Arts, Entertainment, & Sports
 - The Chamber supports film and television production incentives to encourage selection of filmmaking locations within Virginia.
 - The Chamber supports public funding for tourism, cultural arts, entertainment and sports activities, and urges continued support of public/private partnerships benefiting these programs.

- The Chamber supports efforts to increase regional tourism through an inclusive commemoration of the Civil War and the Emancipation.
 - The Chamber supports current law requiring Virginia public schools to open after Labor Day.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to promote sports tourism and healthy lifestyles through cycling, running, walking, and other athletic activities.
 - Government Contracting
 - The Chamber supports acquisition and procurement reform initiatives that streamline the contracting and purchasing process and maximize the business opportunities for the private sector with governments. The Chamber opposes legislation that would unduly harm the contracting community and create more barriers to entry.
- **Education & Workforce Development**
 - Early Childhood Development
 - The Chamber supports funding access to quality home visitation.
 - The Chamber supports encourages expansion of funding of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.
 - The Chamber supports the funding and full implementation of a statewide quality rating system.
 - The Chamber supports necessary and adequate funding of early childhood development initiatives including, but not limited to, Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Virginia Preschool initiative.
 - K-12 Education
 - The Chamber supports a rigorous curriculum in middle and high schools.
 - The Chamber supports proposals that address workforce shortage issues.
 - The Chamber supports proposals that decrease the dropout rate.
 - The Chamber supports increased funding and support for vocational and technical training in public schools.
 - The Chamber supports strategies that ensure all high school graduates are college or workforce ready.
 - The Chamber supports strategic education and workforce policies and programs focused on strengthening U.S. education performance and workforce competitiveness, including, but not limited to, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
 - The Chamber supports proposals that assist in the attraction and retention of quality teachers.
 - The Chamber supports careful review of the allocation of funds to ensure that each dollar spent has a direct impact on improving the educational system.
 - The Chamber supports efforts that promote life-long learning.
 - Higher Education
 - The Chamber supports the issuance of bonds to address necessary capital construction for higher education institutions.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to fully fund base adequacy standards for public higher education.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to adequately fund Tuition Assistance Grants for private higher education.
 - Workforce Development
 - The Chamber supports education that facilitates career transitions.
- **Health, Safety & Welfare**
 - Affordable Housing and Development

- The Chamber supports funding of housing trust funds and other reasonable public policy measures that encourage and incentivize the development of affordable workforce housing.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to implement economic initiatives that encourage and support the continued development of appropriate mixed-use sites, commercial and retail uses and neighborhoods.
 - Crime & Public Safety
 - The Chamber supports community policing.
 - The Chamber supports adequate staffing for law enforcement and constitutional officers.
 - Environment
 - The Chamber supports efforts to ensure a clean and healthy environment that are scientifically based and economically reasonable.
 - The Chamber supports efforts to encourage the responsible and efficient use of natural and energy resources, but opposes efforts to implement an energy cap & trade system.
 - The Chamber supports and encourages sustainable development in the construction and development of new public projects
 - Health Care
 - The Chamber supports legislation to help businesses provide affordable coverage for their employees; including but not limited to, improvements to health savings accounts (HSAs) to make it easier for small businesses and individuals to participate, tax deductibility of premiums for individuals and the self-employed, and additional private options in the marketplace.
 - Parks & Greenways
 - The Chamber supports continued public funding for renovating public parks, community centers and green spaces.
 - The Chamber supports green infrastructure – the thoughtful and intentional mapping of areas designated for open space, parks, preserves and the enjoyment of our region’s natural resources.
- **Labor**
 - Labor Unions
 - The Chamber supports Virginia’s right to work law and opposes efforts to substantially change the process by which employees unionize, such as “card check” legislation.
 - Immigration
 - The Chamber supports comprehensive immigration reform that establishes a temporary worker program and an earned pathway to work or citizenship for undocumented residents while also improving border security and employee verification systems.
 - The Chamber supports rational and reasonable immigration reform that takes into account the need for essential workers and does not place an undue burden on businesses.
 - The Chamber supports programs that give employers the ability to access and keep talent necessary to compete in the global market.
- **Regulatory & Government Reform**
 - Tort Reform
 - The Chamber supports capping of punitive damage awards.
 - The Chamber supports continuation of the doctrine of contributory negligence.
 - The Chamber supports replacing the concept of joint and several liability with proportional liability based on percentage of fault of all defendants and non-parties.
 - Regulatory Reform
 - The Chamber supports streamlining government laws and regulations that fairly balance their objectives with the costs and burdens they impose.

- Government Reform
 - The Chamber supports the passage of a constitutional amendment that would permit two consecutive gubernatorial terms.
 - The Chamber supports a non-partisan redistricting process in the Commonwealth.
 - The Chamber supports efforts that facilitate greater public/private partnerships in government contracting for capital improvements including, but not limited to, bridges, buildings, roads and schools.
 - The Chamber supports continued cooperation and collaboration between elected and appointed officials within jurisdictions and across geographical lines.
 - The Chamber supports privatization of ABC stores provided it can be done equitably and in a manner that does not substantially reduce state revenue from liquor sales.
- Taxation
 - The Chamber supports fiscal responsibility in government, including taxes that provide critical revenue without unduly burdening taxpayers. Such taxes should be broad-based and equitable, and should not place a disproportionate burden on businesses.
 - The Chamber supports a comprehensive review of the tax structure for the Commonwealth, including the corporate income tax, BPOL tax, and machinery and tool tax. Such review should identify alternative revenue sources that could be used to offset reductions or elimination of any tax.
 - The Chamber supports tax credits for employer-sponsored workplace wellness programs.
 - The Chamber supports tax incentives for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of aging and blighted areas.
- **Transportation & Infrastructure**
 - Transportation
 - The Chamber supports establishment of reliable, efficient passenger rail between Richmond and Washington and higher speed rail from Richmond-Washington, Richmond to Hampton Roads, and into North Carolina.
 - The Chamber supports the creation of a regional transportation authority for the Greater Richmond region.
 - The Chamber supports continued funding for the local and regional priority transportation projects as identified by the RRPDC/MPO.
 - Mass Transit
 - The Chamber supports adequate funding for mass transit.
 - The Chamber supports public policy measures and funding to expand mass transit within our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia consistent with the recommendations of GRTC's Operational Study and the recommendations of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission's regional mass transit study.
 - Water Transportation
 - The Chamber supports the Water Resources Development Act, which would provide better protection to the economy and citizens against severe weather and flooding and would facilitate commerce at our nation's waterways and ports.
 - Energy
 - The Chamber supports responsible energy proposals to expand domestic nuclear, oil, coal, and on and offshore gas production; invest in alternative and clean energy technologies; and improve the energy infrastructure.
 - The Chamber supports the development of sustainable alternative energy sources.
 - Public Utilities
 - The Chamber supports the expansion of public water and sewer infrastructure to address the needs of development, and funding for combined sewer overflow.