



# 2010 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Pennsylvania's job creators face numerous obstacles as they compete in today's global economy; an overly burdensome tax structure, antiquated labor laws, rapidly rising health-care costs and a costly legal environment are just some of the challenges they face. When these factors are compounded with an aging population, an under-performing education system, and state government spending that continues to expand faster than the rate of economic growth, the future of Pennsylvania's economic vitality is jeopardized.

In order to drastically improve the Commonwealth's economic outlook, we must establish a competitive business climate. To do so, we must ensure that the costs of running a business and providing jobs encourage companies to do business in Pennsylvania. The following are priorities for the Pennsylvania Chamber:

## **Real, effective changes to improve our business tax structure**

Pennsylvania's corporate tax laws are uncompetitive when compared to the rest of the nation. Across-the-board reforms and reductions in business taxes are necessary in order to stimulate economic development. Businesses oppose the adoption of burdensome reporting requirements, fees and regulations.

## **Labor laws and regulations that are more cost-effective**

Pennsylvania's labor laws are more burdensome and costly than other states' labor laws. Businesses support reforms to the workers' compensation system and unemployment compensation program that would lower costs and lessen the burden on employers. Businesses oppose artificial inflations to the cost of maintaining and/or creating a job in Pennsylvania, such as minimum wage increases at the state level and prevailing wage laws.

## **Affordable health-care access for employees**

Health care costs continue to rise at unsustainable levels. Businesses need to be able to offer necessary, appropriate and effective health-care benefits to their employees either through traditional coverage or alternative options in the marketplace. Businesses oppose shifting additional resources to government-run insurance programs.

## **Reforms to Pennsylvania's costly legal system**

The high legal costs paid by Pennsylvania employers stunt the Commonwealth's economic growth. Fairness, common sense and personal responsibility need to be returned as an integral part of our courts by continuing to reform our antiquated legal system. Businesses support the re-enactment of the Fair Share Act and oppose the expansion of liability laws that could lead to more lawsuit abuse in Pennsylvania.

## **Effective public and private economic development programs that meet businesses' needs**

Pennsylvania's economic growth has lagged the national average for some time. Pennsylvania can close this gap through true economic growth by addressing the priorities on this list which complement businesses' job creation and retention efforts.

## **Flexibility in energy markets and science-based environmental requirements**

The impact of increasingly restrictive environmental regulations and, particularly, the impact of government actions on energy prices are a point of growing concern for Pennsylvania businesses. Businesses oppose the imposition of new mandates and requirements on energy as it brings less flexibility to the system, ultimately leading to higher costs.

## **In addition, the Chamber supports:**

- A public education system that establishes clear accountability and provides every child with the opportunity to receive a quality education at reasonable taxpayer cost.
- Workforce development programs that have clear performance criteria and are targeted to the needs of the community.
- Transportation and infrastructure system that is modern, safe and efficient in order to facilitate the free flow of goods and commerce and the mobility of its citizens for business and recreational activities Pennsylvania needs to invest in its transportation and infrastructure. Significant additional dollars are needed for Pennsylvania's infrastructure to address clearly identified needs in all sectors.

For more specific information on these and other PA Chamber legislative positions, please refer to individual Chamber policy statements that are available online at [www.pachamber.org](http://www.pachamber.org) or through the PA Chamber Government Affairs Department.

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