



2021 Legislative Agenda

Pennsylvania's business community was tested repeatedly in 2020; and while ongoing and new obstacles will no doubt abound in 2021, employers will continue to rise to the challenge. Lawmakers should strive to serve as partners, pursuing a public policy agenda that helps businesses survive and facilitates broad economic recovery.

Even during these unusual and challenging times, certain fundamental qualities of the Commonwealth remain unchanged: Pennsylvania has abundant natural resources, geographic advantages and first rate educational and training institutions, yet still struggles to compete with other states. While lawmakers are appropriately focused on navigating through the current health and economic emergency, it is vital they keep an eye to the future and help position Pennsylvania for long-term prosperity. A pro-growth, forward-thinking legislative agenda has the potential to create a compelling vision; attract emerging, expanding and reshoring industries; and encourage existing employers to increase their commitment on their Pennsylvania investment.



Emergency Preparedness and Response

Pennsylvania employers recognize that extreme measures will continue to be necessary to address the pandemic and significant energy and investments have already been spent to protect their workers and customers. The PA Chamber urges lawmakers to regularly solicit business community perspectives and incorporate feedback into future emergency preparedness and response measures. Policies should be clear, based on sound evidence and, to the extent possible, allow businesses necessary time and resources to comply and plan ahead.



Workforce Development and Career Readiness

Employers in Pennsylvania continue to experience workforce challenges that are detrimental to our economy and prospects for growth. We urge lawmakers to build on past efforts and focus on policies that will help students prepare for a future career; facilitate upskilling opportunities for incumbent workers; those on the sidelines to transition back into the workforce; and make Pennsylvania an attractive destination for individuals starting careers or relocating.



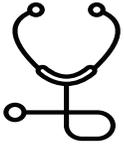
Responsible State Spending and Smart Government

The PA Chamber urges the legislature and Governor to work collaboratively on a responsible, on-time state budget that exhausts all opportunities for cost-savings and more efficient spending. Lawmakers should continue to focus on reforming state government operations, particularly where investment of resources is greatest, including public pension systems, the criminal justice system and mandated programs. The PA Chamber also supports public-private partnerships and opportunities to privatize those government services that could be more efficiently provided by the private sector.



Improve The Business Tax Structure

Policymakers should reform and align the Commonwealth's tax structure with 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 a high level of quality care and accessibility for employees at affordable prices and without undue 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 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, including safe harbor from unwarranted pandemic-related lawsuits for those adhering to safety guidelines. The PA Chamber supports lawsuit abuse reform proposals that provide for full and timely compensation of parties legitimately injured; give employers predictability and certainty; and change the judicial system to achieve greater efficiencies and unbiased justice.



Modern, Safe, Efficient and Reliable Infrastructure Systems

Pennsylvania must construct and maintain reliable transportation, telecommunications, wireless 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

The PA Chamber supports labor and employment standards that help create a fair work environment without triggering negative unintended consequences. This includes eliminating misuse and improving the unemployment compensation system; and facilitating a workers' compensation system that focuses on returning injured workers to full health and function and roots out abuse. Employers oppose excessive mandates; artificial wage inflators; and laws that force individuals in the private sector to pay dues to a union as a condition of employment.



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, so they are best qualified to ultimately enter the workforce.