

**BUSINESS
ADVOCACY**
**GUIDING
PRINCIPLES**

THE FOLLOWING ARE STANDING
PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS
ADOPTED BY THE CHAMBER'S
BOARD OF DIRECTORS.



**Charleston Metro
Chamber of Commerce**

Attainable Housing

Support incentives and market-driven solutions to increase the housing supply, promote a diversity of housing types and price points region-wide to ensure attainable housing options for everyone in the region.

**Business Creation, Recruitment,
Retention and Expansion**

Support legislation that helps the region create, attract, retain and expand businesses and industries that generate quality jobs. Advocate for a conducive business climate and balanced regulatory environment.

Competitive Tax Climate

Advocate for a state-wide tax climate that ensures fairness, predictability, accountability and compliance while balancing income, property and sales tax levies.

Education and Workforce Development

Advocate for the changes necessary in early childhood, K-12 and higher education to prepare all students for the careers of the future and to provide a skilled workforce to support the region's employers.

Energy

Support an energy regulatory climate that prioritizes the state's future energy needs with sufficient protections for electric utility ratepayers. Encourage energy generation from a variety of sources to produce reliable, affordable, sustainable electricity for the state's businesses and citizens.

Environmental Stewardship

Promote a balanced approach to environmental regulation that embraces responsible stewardship without unreasonably burdening business and industry. The natural environment is important to our region's quality of place, economic competitiveness and overall wellness.

Healthcare

Promote workforce wellness and a culture of good health by supporting policies that ensure quality of healthcare while helping reduce healthcare costs for business and expanding access to medical insurance coverage for state residents.

Hospitality

Support the investments and workforce needed to ensure the continued vitality of the region's hospitality industry.

Immigration Reform

Support comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level that helps businesses attract and retain talented individuals that fuel our globally connected economy.

International Trade

Support international trade agreements that are fair, accountable, consistent and that reduce barriers to free and open markets.

Military and Federal Facilities

Advance legislative priorities in the South Carolina Military Base Task Force comprehensive plan. Support policies and investments that promote the retention and expansion of military operations and federal facilities in the Charleston region.

Port Development

Support the continued growth and expansion of South Carolina's ports.

Regional Land Use Planning

Support coordinated decisions among local governments that align the core values of Choice, Balance and Stewardship as described in the Sustainable Growth Ethic and that promote the efficient use of land essential to economic growth and prosperity.

Transportation Infrastructure

Enhance the capacity of our multimodal transportation network including roads, mass transit, pedestrian systems and freight movement facilities. Support funding to complete every project listed in the Chamber's Infrastructure Priorities report.

2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

STATE PRIORITIES



Charleston Metro
Chamber of Commerce

PRIORITY ISSUES

The Charleston Metro Chamber urges the General Assembly to pass legislation this session that achieves the following outcomes:

State Fiscal Health

- Support reforms to the current South Carolina Retirement System that will eliminate the unfunded liability by closing the state pension system to new employees and moving to a defined contribution plan.
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Talent, Education and Workforce

- Update and modernize South Carolina's state education funding model to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality public education.
 - Support the Higher Education Finance Act to increase funding for state colleges and universities and relieve the tuition burden for South Carolina students.
 - Secure \$25.6 million to renovate Trident Technical College's Berkeley Campus, creating the Lowcountry Transportation and Logistics Center.
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COMPETITIVENESS ISSUES

The Charleston Metro Chamber encourages the General Assembly to address the following economic competitiveness factors:

Talent and Education

- Fully fund the Education Finance Act (EFA) as required by state law. This year an additional \$487 million is needed for the EFA to be fully funded.
- Support state funding for Career Technical Education (CTE) dual credit programs fostering more youth apprenticeships statewide.
- Ensure teacher salaries continue to be competitive at the regional, state and local levels.

Military Base Retention and Expansion

- Fully exempt military retirement benefits from state income tax.
 - Ensure that development of offshore wind energy facilities do not threaten the mission, training or operation of state military installations.
 - Change the Military Service, Education and Credentialing Act to make it more efficient for transitioning military families to earn professional licenses in South Carolina.
 - Support drone restrictions near the Joint Base Charleston airbase to protect the safety of their mission.
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Entrepreneurship

- Reauthorize the Angel Investor Tax Credit program to maintain an important source of funding for South Carolina start-up enterprises.
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Workforce Housing

- Support legislation to facilitate development of workforce attainable housing by allowing builders to easily partner with non-profit organizations on tax exempt projects.

Business Climate

- Re-institute joint and several protections for businesses to reasonably reflect fault in tort actions.
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Taxes and Regulation

- Streamline the business license fee system and make the process more uniform while minimizing fiscal impacts to municipalities.
 - The Chamber supports tax reform efforts to make the tax code a more fair, equitable and competitive system for the business community.
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Environmental Stewardship

- Support funding for an updated State Water Plan to ensure adequate surface and ground water supplies for business, agricultural and residential use.