

Legislative **AGENDA**

2022



Charleston Metro
Chamber of Commerce



charlestonchamber.org

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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

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.
- Make it easier for mid-career professionals who want to switch to teaching, specifically in STEM fields.
- Secure \$6 million for the completion of Trident Technical College's Berkeley Campus creating the Lowcountry Transportation and Logistics Center.

MILITARY 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.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Review our state's current penal code to better align crimes and sentencing, expand the number of non-violent felony offenses for expungement and better prepare inmates for high-demand career opportunities making it easier to transition into the workforce. These issues meet these directives:
 - Reform civil asset forfeiture laws
 - Assist returning citizens with vital records, so they have them upon release
 - Pass a hate crimes statute
 - Create a state tax credit for hiring returning citizens
 - Expand expungement for non-violent offenders

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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Provide resources to make it easier for employees to work from home.
- Increase state investment in tourism advertising, which supports our current hospitality industry and can lead to tourists relocating and becoming employers in South Carolina.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support funding for electric vehicle charging stations and incentives for the infrastructure needed.
- Create a solution for electric and alternative fuel vehicles to pay their fair share of the road use fee.

COMPETITIVENESS ISSUES

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

TALENT AND EDUCATION

- Allow a high school language option for computer languages as an alternative to traditional foreign languages.
- Support state funding for Career Technical Education (CTE) dual credit programs fostering more youth apprenticeships statewide.
- Increase teacher pay to the national average.

TAXES AND REGULATION

- The Chamber supports tax reform efforts to make the tax code a more fair, equitable and competitive system for the business community. We support either comprehensive reform or incremental changes to our tax system.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

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

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Support funding for an updated State Water Plan to ensure adequate surface and ground water supplies for business, agricultural and residential use.
- Support the expansion of solar and other renewable power resources statewide.

INVEST IN RURAL BROADBAND

- Support long-term funding to extend access for education, healthcare and to support a remote workforce. We must support policies that promote private-sector investment in next generation broadband technologies and infrastructure critical to accelerating our 21st century economy for our state.



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