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State Legislative Agenda 2015



Serving as a progressive advocate for business, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages work at all levels of government to stimulate jobs; supports non-regressive sources of revenue without levying a disproportionate burden on any individual segment of Alabama's economy; seeks efficiencies in government and protects fundamental public services.

The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce and Mobile's economic development partners have identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress because they will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Legislative Action

Economic Development & Taxes

Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile area based companies, particularly for the construction of Austal USA's Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels and the future small Surface Combatant ships, as well as Ingalls Shipbuilding's LHA/LPD Amphibious Assault Ships and Coast Guard cutters.

Make Alabama more competitive with other Southern states by passing economic development legislation that encourages job creation and the investment of capital by making statutory incentive programs more usable and applicable to new and expanding business.

Continue the growing investments in the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings, by extending the Alabama Historic Tax Credit beyond the 2015 expiration date.

Support local small business, and provide a level playing field for all retailers, through the collection of state and local sales tax from all online transactions.

Increase access to global markets through fair trade initiatives and agreements, including the continued funding of the Ex-Im Bank, approval of federal Trade Promotion Authority and the reduction of trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.

Encourage balanced and inclusive pro-business practices and government procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices for both local and out-of-town investors; and support the further analysis of local and regional tax reform.

Re-align taxes and regulatory fees paid to the Public Service Commission to better reflect the actual costs of performing necessary day-to-day functions of affected state agencies.

Education & Workforce Development

Increase education funding to enhance k-12 preparedness and the ultimate success of students through the expansion of quality pre-kindergarten educational programs in Alabama.

Fully fund the FY '16 Education Budget to allow for the full implementation of the Alabama Board of Education's PLAN 2020, which includes the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, along with proven education initiatives such as Alabama Reading Initiative, Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative, the Career/Technical Education Initiative dual-enrollment programs, and other innovative and flexible college prep and career-ready programs.

Energy, Environment & Infrastructure

Ensure that all projects and initiatives funded by the RESTORE ACT provide for long-term environmental restoration and/or economic recovery to Alabama's coastal region. All approved projects and initiatives should adhere to a sound, scientific framework of analyses, an economic benefit assessment and a method of accountability.

Increase the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, through a comprehensive energy policy that promotes energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.

Relieve growing congestion by finalizing the final site selection and funding of the proposed I-10 Mobile River bridge and Bayway widening project with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

Support annual operations and maintenance dredging of Mobile area waterways, including the Port of Mobile, Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels by securing adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District.

Preserve jobs and economic growth through the removal of barriers that can derail infrastructure projects and the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.

Small Business

Assist small businesses after a natural disaster by establishing state-guaranteed, zero-interest small business loans available immediately following a federally-declared natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.

Reduce the cost of flood insurance for local business and property owners by encouraging reforms in local and state government that will ultimately increase the credits available through National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and lower the CRS classification in local municipalities.

Protect an employer's right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer from restricting unauthorized firearm possession on company property.

Healthcare

Encourage the Governor to explore existing and future options for funding Medicaid in Alabama.

Allow local health care providers to quickly and effectively implement the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act.