



2021 LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEMS

WE ARE THE CHAMBER, AND WE HAVE SERVED AS MOBILE'S PROGRESSIVE BUSINESS ADVOCATE SINCE 1836. MOBILE CONNECTS ALABAMA TO THE WORLD, AND THE CHAMBER IS HERE TO ADVOCATE FOR LEGISLATION THAT GROWS MOBILE AND ALABAMA'S INFLUENCE IN THE REGION, ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND AROUND THE WORLD.

FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATIONS FOR ALABAMA

- ★ As businesses continue to operate and provide their services to the community, they must do so without the threat of unwarranted lawsuits associated with coronavirus. The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports codifying the Governor's Safe Harbor Proclamation to provide businesses and healthcare providers protection against civil liability resulting from the contraction of the coronavirus.
- ★ The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce supports increasing Alabama's investment in transportation infrastructure to sustain and promote economic growth, job creation, quality of life and public safety. The Chamber recognizes there is a gap between current state resources and what is required to address the highway, bridge, and other road maintenance and capital needs in Alabama today and in the future, specifically for critical needs such as building the I-10 Mobile River bridge and completing the four-laning of U.S. Highway 98.
- ★ Advocate for adequately funding Alabama's Education budget, including Alabama's first-class pre-kindergarten, career tech, dual enrollment and other innovative programs, in order to ensure a competitive increase in student scoring, higher graduation rates and competitive college and career ready graduates; maintain high academic standards and expectations for all Alabama students such as those found in the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards or Common Core.
- ★ Seek a fiscal year 2022 state budget appropriation for the University of South Alabama that reflects the institution's positive impact on its students, community and our region, along with additional funding to support USA Health in recognition of its unique mission as the region's only health care provider with a Level One Trauma Center, Burn Unit and Neonatal Intensive Care facility.
- ★ Advocate for the official recognition of Dauphin Island Sea Lab Estuarium as the Aquarium of Alabama and support a fiscal year 2022 state budget appropriation for DISL that reflects the institution's increased state-wide student and faculty participation in its nationally acclaimed education and research programs and supports the needed modernization of infrastructure to meet future programmatic growth.
- ★ In order to ensure the consistent and bi-partisan management of the planning, building and maintaining of the state's multimodal transportation system and the long-term management of state transportation planning and revenues, the Mobile Area Chamber supports legislation to allow for a tax-exempt Mobile Airport Authority.
- ★ Preserve the integrity of Alabama's First Congressional District through the 2021 redistricting process. It is imperative that Mobile and Baldwin counties remain together as a congressional district to build upon – and not harm – the united regional and business leadership that is unique to southwest Alabama.



- ★ Protect all businesses by reversing the judicially created “discovery rule” for allegations of exposure in toxic tort cases and return to the traditional rule in Alabama that the statute of limitations for allegations of personal injury due to exposure is two years from the date of the last exposure.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES, AMERICA’S LARGEST EMPLOYER

- ★ Preserve jobs and economic growth in all sectors through the reduction of overly burdensome regulations that increase the cost of doing business, create uncertainty and have the potential to stifle growth.
- ★ Encourage the representation and engagement of the Alabama Innovation Commission and the Alabama STEM Council to improve the creation and growth of small businesses and entrepreneurial development in Alabama as well as workforce development opportunities across the state.
- ★ Support the growth and development of Mobile’s entrepreneurial community and Innovation Portal’s mapping of entrepreneurial talent to meet the growing technological needs of industry with state funding opportunities. Promote efforts to provide much-needed programming, skills training and funding for entrepreneurial clients, as well as enable the engagement of local industry to identify technological solutions to small business challenges.
- ★ In order to avoid excessive and frivolous lawsuits and ensure fully-accessible public buildings and spaces, close the loophole in Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, by providing clearer rules for identifying and correcting ADA access violations and allowing business and property owners the opportunity to address and correct minor ADA infractions in a defined period of time, prior to an allowable civil law suit.
- ★ Protect an employer’s right to provide a safe workplace by opposing any legislation that would keep an employer or property owner from restricting firearm possession on company or private property.
- ★ Support measures to replenish the state’s unemployment insurance trust fund that mitigates the impact of increased taxes on Alabama businesses, particularly small businesses, that are facing unprecedented unemployment insurance tax increases due to the ongoing pandemic.
- ★ Ensure small businesses are truly protected from being frivolously named in lawsuits as part of forum shopping by supporting legislation to amended Ala. Code 6-5-501(2)(a) and 6-5-521 to make clear that the only exception to the immunity of innocent distributors is independent torts wholly unrelated to product liability claims.

MADE BY ALABAMA, FOR AMERICA and THE WORLD

- ★ Maintain federal military contracts with Mobile-area employers, particularly the Navy’s shipbuilding blueprint for the future which includes current and future small surface combatants and auxiliary ships to incorporate autonomous and unmanned surface vehicles and Expeditionary Fast Transports.
- ★ Support free and fair trade and investment policies that expand access to international markets, reduce trade barriers, and increase foreign direct investment creating a level playing field to put Mobile area families, businesses, and workers first and improving the overall international competitiveness of Alabama exporters.

KEEPING ALABAMA OPEN FOR BUSINESS

- ★ Continued support to fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District Civil Works program in support of the deepening and widening and the annual operations and maintenance dredging of the



Mobile Ship Channel; maintain necessary funding for the operation and maintenance of Alabama's commerce waterways, including the deepening of the Bayou la Batre and Coden ship channels.

- ★ Support the funding and construction of the proposed I-10 Mobile River Bridge and partner with the Alabama Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to actively seek construction funding through Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants and other sources.
- ★ Support the extension of the state income tax credit through 2029 for rehabilitation of certified historic structures, a proven incentive for bringing more investment capital into projects that will use it directly for job creation and sustained economic activity.
- ★ Continued support for the renewal of economic development tax incentives, the Alabama Jobs Act and the Growing Alabama Tax Credit. These programs have become the foundation of the state's economic development efforts, and they have been tied to the state's largest new industry announcements in recent years.

A HEALTHY ALABAMA

- ★ Support measures to address the growing opioid crisis in Alabama that has detrimental effects on the availability of a qualified workforce, workplace safety and overall community health.
- ★ Support a provider-driven approach to reforming Alabama's current Medicaid program to ensure access to care, control costs and maximize the return of Alabama's tax dollars to the state.
- ★ Seek a permanent funding source for Mobile's Programs for All-inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE) and the expansion of such programs across the state in order to draw down increased federal funds for the medical care of the state's growing nursing home population at a cost savings to Medicaid.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF ALABAMA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

- ★ Support the continuation of federal payments to Alabama, specifically Mobile and Baldwin counties, from the 2006 Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA). Under GOMESA, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas receive a share of revenue from oil and gas drilling in federal waters, which helps address coastal restoration, hurricane protection and watershed management programs in coastal Alabama.

TRAINING and ADVANCING ALABAMA'S WORKFORCE

- ★ Continue to identify needs and support demand-driven strategic workforce training initiatives in south Alabama's key economic growth sectors, including aerospace, maritime and advanced manufacturing.
- ★ As prison reform is addressed, advocate for reentry and job skills training programs to meet the need for able-bodied workers in our region.