

Chamber Advocacy and Florida Legislative Actions That Affect Your Business



By Don Long, Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce

One of the most important mission components for chambers of commerce is **advocacy**. To support this component, most chambers organize **advocacy** or governmental affairs committees composed of business leaders from numerous segments of the local markets. These committees usually work under the direction of the boards of directors with assistance from the chamber staff.

From the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, **advocacy** is, “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal”. Therefore, chamber advocacy programs act on behalf of the community’s interests by thorough research of local trends along with advice gained from affiliation with statewide or nationwide **advocacy** programs. During the 2022 Florida Legislative session, the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce (LNRCC) monitored and participated in programs established by the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Association of Chamber Professionals that strive to **advocate** for Florida and local businesses.

The Florida Chamber offered several opportunities for local chambers to support or oppose bills during the legislative session that ended in March 2022. Whether a business owner or resident, many of these issues are worth knowing about. Here, readers can read a brief review of three of the most important legislative issues affecting Florida businesses. More detailed reviews are available by visiting the Florida Chamber of Commerce website, <https://www.flchamber.com/advocacy/legislative-updates/>.

- **Visit Florida Extension** was approved for funding through 2028. Visit Florida funding was scheduled

to expire October 2023. Most chambers believe Visit Florida is a primary part of supporting our tourism industry.

- **Fix to Homeowners Insurance** passed the Senate but not the House. The bill would address insurance companies’ inability to reissue policies, pricing of renewals at unaffordable levels, or ceasing Florida operations in entirety. It will also address several issues with the State provided Citizens Insurance program. Several Senate lawmakers requested inclusion of this issue during the April 2022 Legislation Special Session scheduled by Governor DeSantis.
- **The Consumer Data Privacy Bill** is stalled indefinitely. The bill faced heavy opposition from most chambers and the business community. If approved, the bill would require significant and costly changes to how businesses collect and share customer information.

Your local chamber may also **advocate** support or opposition to local government matters. Before officially supporting or opposing local government matters, chambers usually consult with the local business community. Within LNRCC, the board of directors considers whether to **advocate** for support or opposition. The chamber may then respond by requesting letters of support or opposition from their members. Citizens should take these **advocacy** opportunities seriously so that government elected, and departmental officials hear the voice of the community.

When receiving an opportunity to provide your opinion LNRCC encourages your comment. **L**

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