

## **The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce 2021 Policy Agenda**

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce is a significant voice for business in Springfield and Sangamon County and has an obligation to its members to represent their interests to all levels of government and to the public. The Chamber supports public policy that encourages entrepreneurship, development, job creation and investment. The Chamber opposes public policy that creates unnecessary regulation and/or burdens on the business community that will negatively impact the business climate and the creation of new jobs.

### **Local Policy Agenda**

#### **Development Policy**

Springfield and Sangamon County must have a consistent, streamlined, transparent, and predictable development process.

#### **Infrastructure**

Properly maintaining our infrastructure and transportation system is important to the quality of life and economic growth of our community. The Chamber supports a comprehensive transportation and infrastructure plan, including the continued implementation of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project.

#### **Economic & Local Business Incentives**

Springfield and Sangamon County need to be proactive in business retention, expansion, and attraction. To better compete for jobs and talent, The Chamber supports an aggressive, coordinated, public-private approach to economic development.

#### **Springfield Secondary Water Supply**

Springfield needs to act on securing a secondary water source for our community. Hunter Lake has proven to be the lowest cost, high yield alternative by several studies conducted by professional and technical staff. The Chamber supports Hunter Lake as the City of Springfield and outlying communities' secondary water source.

### **State Policy Agenda**

#### **State Business Climate**

We support and promote a competitive tax climate that encourages entrepreneurship, investment, and job creation. The Chamber opposed passage of the constitutional amendment to implement a statewide graduated income tax in November of 2020. The Chamber generally opposes tax increases, particularly when used to increase dollars in the general operating budget.

#### **State Regulations**

The Chamber opposes overly burdensome regulations and government overreach.

### **Minimum Wage**

The Chamber opposed 2019 legislation that increased the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025. Increasing the minimum wage in Illinois will hurt business and job growth and will have a negative effect on our economy. The Chamber strongly supports all efforts to amend the 2019 legislation or new legislation that would regionalize the minimum wage, including but not limited to the use of tax credits to accomplish regionalization.

### **State Budget, Finances, and Pension Reform**

The State must immediately act to address its fiscal crisis. Illinois, at a minimum, must cap spending for several years while implementing a long-term strategy towards addressing the structural budget deficit, including unfunded pension liabilities. Without significant reforms pension costs will continue to eliminate core government services, encourage additional tax increases, and do irreversible damage to Illinois' finances and economy.

### **Ethics Reform**

Illinois lawmakers have lost the public trust. The Chamber supports meaningful ethics reform which can provide a foundation for targeting corruption and beginning the long process of restoring the people's trust in state government and our elected officials.

### **Redistricting Reform**

The way districts are drawn is one of the most important functions of government as this determines how elections will be handled for ten years. Allowing the legislators to draw their own districts has shown electoral consequences of politicians and political parties choosing their voters instead of voters choosing their elected officials. The Chamber supports the ongoing effort to amend the Illinois Constitution and turn the process over to an independent nonpartisan panel.

### **Mid-Illinois Medical District**

The Mid-Illinois Medical District (MIMD) is a one-square mile designation in the heart of Springfield just to the north of downtown. Established in 2003 by an act of the Illinois General Assembly, the MIMD is a vibrant environment that supports patient care, bio-medical research, new medical technologies, and advanced medical-related activities. The Mission of the MIMD is to promote the orderly development and expansion of health care facilities and medical-related industries. The Chamber supports an annual appropriation by the State of Illinois to provide funding for the MIMD.

### **Transportation**

The State of Illinois needs to adequately invest in our transportation network in the most efficient way possible. The Chamber supports a plan that provides a framework for increased transportation spending with reliable and sustainable revenue sources.

## **Federal Policy Agenda**

### **Transportation**

The FAST Act was the first real multi-year authorization in over a decade providing funding certainty (expiration date September 30, 2020). Funding has been extended for one year. The Chamber supports the reauthorization of the FAST Act or similar multi-year legislation addressing America's ongoing surface transportation and infrastructure needs.

### **Tax Reform**

The current federal tax code is complicated, burdensome, and not working for the betterment of our nation. The tax code should be simplified and reformed to allow for consistent treatment for all businesses and industries. Any reforms need to be tied to a multi-year plan for deficit reduction and long-term spending reform.

### **Healthcare**

Healthcare is a growing expense for businesses and governments. Proactive and ongoing steps need to be taken to reduce the cost of healthcare.

### **Workforce Investment**

The Chamber supports local control of Workforce Investment Boards to meet the unique workforce needs of our community. The Chamber opposes consolidating funding into a state block grant. This would consolidate power and funding into the State and away from the local level.

### **Immigration Reform**

Our current immigration system is not meeting the needs of our society, our economy, our businesses, or our workforce demands. The Chamber supports comprehensive, commonsense immigration reform that protects our borders and national security while facilitating trade and travel, addresses workforce needs, and provides a pragmatic opportunity to earn legal status.