

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce 2024 Policy Agenda

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce is a significant voice of and for business in Springfield and Sangamon County and has an obligation to represent the interests of its members. The Chamber supports public policy that encourages entrepreneurship, development, investment, and job creation. We oppose public policy that creates unnecessary regulation that will negatively impact the business climate and the creation of jobs.

The Chamber advocates for our members by:

- Working with elected officials, staff, and stakeholders to advance pro-business policies
- Testifying at public meetings and hearings
- Monitoring, reviewing, and when appropriate taking positions on proposed legislation and regulations
- Promoting business interests to the media

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. Lake II has proven to be the lowest cost, high yield alternative by several studies conducted by professional and technical staff. The Chamber supports Lake II 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.

State Regulations

The Chamber opposes overly burdensome regulations and government overreach that add to the complexities and costs faced by businesses and employers. This includes but is not limited to issues related to employment law, workers compensation costs, and unemployment insurance.

State Budget, Finances, and Pension Reform

The State must 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 begin 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. Between the ongoing Rebuild Illinois capital program and new federal resources, the Chamber recognizes that 2024 presents great opportunities for infrastructure investment in the State of Illinois. The Chamber encourages state leaders to take advantage of these resources by moving projects forward expediently and seeking new competitive funding to leverage the State's investments.

Energy

Carbon Capture Storage Regulatory Framework: HB 2202 (Hoffman) / SB 2153 (Cunningham) Illinois can build upon the historic CEJA legislation by positioning itself as a leader in carbon capture storage, unlocking new opportunities for manufacturing, spurring job creation by decarbonizing industries, and greening our economy. We intend to support efforts such as HB 2202 and SB 2153 to create a carbon capture storage regulatory and legal framework to enable future CO2 storage projects across Illinois.

Federal Policy Agenda

Transportation

The Chamber supports the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden. This act includes a long-term surface transportation reauthorization through 2026. The Chamber supports this multi-year legislation addressing America's ongoing surface transportation and infrastructure needs. The Chamber encourages the continued funding of this act at the amount allocated in the bill.

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. We support market-based solutions that will provide affordable, efficient, high-quality healthcare options for employers, employees, and residents.

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. The Chamber will continue to support the efforts of the US Chamber's Project Liberty to address the immigration crisis in America.

<https://www.uschamber.com/immigration/liberty-campaign-coalition-letter-to-congress>