



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION

2022

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION PLAN

Presented to the 117th Congress
by the 2022 Bryan/College Station
Chamber of Commerce Delegation

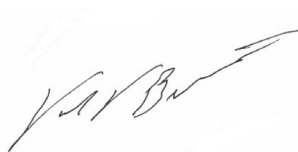


**Economic Development • Fiscal Responsibility • Healthcare
Transportation Mobility & Infrastructure • Higher Education & Workforce Training**

2022 FEDERAL LEGISL

The Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce has as its foremost mission the continuation and cultivation of a vigorous and diverse local economy. Through its many programs, the Chamber enhances the ability of companies in the Brazos Valley to grow and prosper. One of the most important roles of our Chamber is to take a proactive approach to ensure that those who represent us nationally in Washington, D.C., state-wide in Austin and locally in Bryan/College Station learn more about the business interests of our community.

The purpose of this Federal Legislative Action Plan is to summarize the important legislative goals in the areas of concern to our nearly 1,600 plus members and our community. We respectfully request your support on the issues outlined in this plan.



Wade Beckman
Chairman of the Board



Glen Brewer
President & CEO

LATIVE ACTION PLAN

The Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce advocates for businesses at the local, state and national levels. The Chamber uses guiding principles in considering positions on issues. At the heart of these principles is the certainty that the strength of a nation, a state and a community is a reflection of the strength of their economies. Wealth and jobs are created through economic development in a free society by means of free enterprise. Businesses, especially small businesses, are the engines that drive economic growth and rely on an atmosphere conducive to that growth.

"When businesses succeed, our non-profits, schools and civic organizations flourish and our governments provide better services for all of our residents. That is the economic cycle that creates the wonderful community in which we all work and live."

- Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development, Fiscal Responsibility and Tax Reform for Business
We encourage lawmakers to increase economic success and quality of life by allowing more localized decision making, Federal policies to support economic development are critical. Our membership continues to be concerned about the rate of spending, as well as, regulatory and tax burdens on businesses, which stifle innovation, affecting growth and jobs

We support:

1. **ENERGY** – Emphasizing policies to secure energy independence, encourage energy exports, and enable innovation in diverse and emerging energy sources, including nuclear energy. Reducing regulations to increase energy production on federal lands.
2. **WORKFORCE** – Building and supporting a qualified workforce by investing funds at the state and regional service area levels which meets local employers' needs, including cybersecurity related areas to upskill or reskill employees. Addressing the national supply chain issues to end the shortage of critical supplies impacting local companies.
3. **FEDERAL PROGRAMS** – Maintaining current authorities and increasing federal investment in economic development programs that support local communities. Facilitating the effectiveness of tools which encourage leveraging funds, creating job opportunities, and stimulating private





investment. Creating and enforcing policies to reduce waste, fraud and duplication of federal programs. Eliminating unfunded mandates on state and local governments.

4. INTERNATIONAL TRADE & IMMIGRATION REFORM – Facilitating fair, equitable international trade agreements thus creating jobs and wealth. Protecting our borders and eliminating loopholes that encourage illegal entry. Enacting comprehensive immigration reform, including guest worker programs that reward legal immigration and foster economic growth.

5. TAX & FINANCIAL REFORM – Continuing comprehensive tax reforms to help U.S. companies better compete in the global marketplace.

6. DEFENSE – Rebuilding national defense to increase U.S. credibility and influence globally while keeping the promises made to our military and veterans

7. CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING ITEMS – Allowing congressionally directed spending items (CDSI) for local development, provided the overall total of CDSIs occur after the federal budget is established, and the total is limited to no more than 1% of discretionary spending.

HEALTHCARE

Americans continue to expect a healthcare system that provides choice for coverage options and providers; focuses on improving the experience of care; improves the health of the population; reduces the per capita cost of healthcare; and ensures financial stability for individuals and businesses. The COVID – 19 pandemic has underscored the importance to ensure access to healthcare as well as the financial viability of healthcare entities that provide care for those most vulnerable patients in healthcare.

We support:

1. **RENEWAL OF THE TEXAS 1115 WAIVER** - Texas safety net hospitals rely on Medicaid supplemental funding provided through the 1115 Waiver. It is critical that our 1115 Waiver is renewed to help safety net providers care for the other 3.7 million residents who do not have healthcare coverage.
 2. **HEALTHCARE WORKER SHORTAGE** - Increased funding of education for nursing school programs focused on acute and critical care to allow them to increase enrollment of healthcare providers who will pursue careers focused on acute and critical care. Buildup of this workforce will be critical to rebuild the nurses, physicians, advanced practitioners and other clinicians to sustain the patient load experienced by hospitals.
 3. **MEDICAID EXPANSION** - Support for the Medicaid Coverage Gap component of the Build Back Better Act, which could provide health care coverage for more than 750,000 of Texas' 4+ million uninsured residents through ACA marketplace. This is a significant step to reducing the large number of uninsured Texans – a group hit hardest by the Covid-19 pandemic.
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TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation and mobility impact every aspect of daily life. The priority is not only the maintenance of transportation infrastructure, it must also allow for multi-modal innovation and expansion in areas of high growth and in times of rapid economic development. As the Bryan/College Station/Brazos County area continues its rapid growth, it is essential that planning and funding for transportation improvements including new or improved corridors remain a high priority to mitigate future mobility impacts. We applaud our Congressional Delegation for recognizing our priorities by including I-14 and I-214 language in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

We support:

1. **INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE** - Exercising oversight to ensure that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is fully funded as authorized and is implemented expeditiously, fairly and efficiently in a manner that enables communities to leverage infrastructure improvements that stimulate economic growth and/or mitigate mobility impacts.
2. **ENHANCED REVENUE STREAMS FOR THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND** - As auto makers produce higher mileage vehicles and with the growth of electric vehicles, fuel tax revenue is decreasing relative to vehicle miles traveled. Developing equitable funding mechanisms such as vehicle registration fees and/or vehicle miles traveled tax and increasing the fuel tax to stabilize and restore the Highway Trust Fund allows for investments in infrastructure maintenance and new transportation networks. We oppose legislative efforts to pause collection of gasoline taxes.





3. IMPROVED PASSENGER RAIL AND COMMERCIAL AIR SERVICE - Bryan/College Station's location within the Texas Triangle necessitates access to multiple modes for intercity travel. Ensure the Federal Railroad Administration and the USDOT support safe, sustainable and privately funded high speed rail. We support Amtrak service linking Houston and Dallas to Bryan/College Station as specified in Amtrak's Corridor Vision. Support Federal Aviation Administration funding for local and regional airports to enhance operational efficiency, safety and passenger convenience.

4. BRAZOS TRANSIT DISTRICT BUS STOPS, BUS SHELTERS AND ELECTRIC BUSES - Brazos Transit District is transitioning from flag stop to fixed stop service and diversifying their fleet. Grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration is needed to develop a network of bus stops and bus shelters that make travel corridors safe and accessible and allow for the purchase of electric buses.

5. PREPARING THE TEXAS ELECTRIC GRID FOR VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION - Experts agree that electric vehicles (EVs) provide positive impacts, including improved air quality and reduced emissions from conventional vehicles. However, as EVs become more widely accepted and used, they will have an impact on the electric grid. The cost to the state of Texas to implement EV infrastructure will be substantial, and therefore it is important that it is done correctly. This initiative from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute will provide necessary data to the State of Texas, as well as private industry, to ensure investments in the electric infrastructure are made where there is the biggest gain.

HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE TRAINING

An educated workforce is vital to the economic growth and vitality of American families and every community. The educational partnerships of Blinn College, Texas A&M University, the Bryan/College Station business community, local governments, K-12 education, and nonprofits are working to share the responsibility of developing a dynamic as well as diverse economy to embrace productive citizens and new technology advancements.

The Collaboration among these partners is resulting in more streamlined approach to identify and provide for our region's educational and workforce needs.

Enhancing federal funding for research, innovation and workforce training not only develops new technologies but it also supports local businesses and creates new jobs. These investments ensure future success of the Brazos Valley.

We support:

1. **FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH** – Increasing annual budgets for competitive grants to institutions of higher education conducting top-tier research initiatives that will maintain American competitiveness in the world.
2. **FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID** – Strengthening the commitment to post-secondary education through continued prioritization by Congress, specifically via programmatic funding dedicated to supporting and expanding innovative measures, at community colleges and tier-one research universities as well as training for veterans and student financial aid.
3. **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION** – Developing broader commitments from mission agencies for apprenticeship programs, such as Research Security Operations (RSO), and increasing funding for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program at NSF are imperative to bolster national competitiveness in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.





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