



Delaware County Chamber of Commerce

Driving Business Forward.

MEMO

To: Members of Delaware County Chamber of Commerce and Legislative Delegation Membership at Large
From: Government Affairs Committee
Date: February 14, 2023
Subject: Policy Priorities for Delaware County Chamber of Commerce

Mission Statement

The advocacy mission of the Delaware County Chamber is to promote the growth and development of the regional business community by advocating for positive and permanent business friendly government laws and regulations; effective communication with our elected officials; and development of strategic partnerships to accomplish these objectives.

Improved Tax Structure & Pro Economic Development Policies

Pennsylvania's tax structure contains some of the highest rates and most restrictive provisions in the country and our corporate tax laws are uncompetitive when compared to the rest of the nation. Across-the-board reforms and reductions in business taxes are necessary to stimulate economic development and create jobs. For these reasons, the Chamber would be opposed to any tax increases or expansions, in particular to the Sales Tax and any reforms that shift the burden to small businesses. In addition, the Chamber supports pursuing policies that maintain local control over tax revenues and other funding sources, focuses on reinvestment of those resources into the local communities and infrastructure (below) and reducing unfunded mandates imposed on our local municipalities from the state and federal level that otherwise divert local resources and constrain municipal and school district budgets.

In addition, the Chamber supports adequate funding of economic development and tourism programs that attract and retain job creators to the region and state.

Improving Costs and Access to Health Care

Making insurance more affordable and accessible to small businesses will encourage entrepreneurs to expand their workforce and benefits packages. The Chamber is concerned about the viability of our healthcare institutions, one of the county's largest employment sectors. Indeed, Delaware County hospitals and health care systems, like all of America's hospital and health systems continue to deal with the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Workforce shortages, increasing supply chain costs, underpayment by Medicare and Medicaid, rising cost of drugs, and an increase of regulatory burdens and administrative requirements have compounded the crisis. Elected officials of all levels need to work together to advance policy that supports our health sector by providing regulatory relief and ensuring adequate payment for

services. All residences and business should have access to high quality care and affordable, comprehensive health insurance coverage.

Support of Critical Infrastructure and Pro Energy Policies

Utility costs can be a significant portion of business operation and the Chamber supports policies that promote continued access to a diverse, reliable energy portfolio. The continued redevelopment of our county refineries on items such as supporting their pro-reform position on the federal Renewable Fuel Standard, access to energy infrastructure such as pipelines and viable nuclear energy generation will ensure that Pennsylvania remains a leader in the energy industry. Additionally, the Chamber supports the encouragement of pro-growth policies for our Commonwealth's energy sector by reducing regulatory hurdles to the utilization and implementation of infrastructure while ensuring appropriate environmental protection and sustainability.

The Chamber also supports increased investment in Pennsylvania's multimodal transportation network. To compete in the global economy, the county, region and state need a modern transportation network to safely and efficiently move people and ensure the stability of supply chains. Indeed, deteriorating infrastructure disrupts mobility and commerce, compromises safety, and impacts the quality of life in our communities. Comprehensive transportation policy should prioritize the restoration of aging infrastructure, improve capacity on existing assets, and begin new construction where conditions warrant. The Chamber will continue to work closely with our members, stakeholders and elected officials to build support for transportation funding solutions that can help access new federal and state investment to advance critical projects that support the needs and changing demands of our growing region.

The Chamber also recognizes that water and wastewater systems are important to the infrastructure and community wellbeing. Pennsylvania funding referendums, potentially supplemented by federal initiatives, should be monitored to ensure water & wastewater infrastructure supports commercial/industrial development initiatives.

Next the Chamber supports policies that incentivize broadband providers to continue investment in the networks which are critical to the movement of commerce, ideas and information via wired and wireless networks.

Finally, the Chamber is an advocate for improved permitting timelines and regulations because punitive policies can result in increased project time frames and substantial costs – delaying or deterring economic growth and job creation.

Training, Education, Workforce Development & Human Services

The Chamber supports policies and funding that encouraging business to locate and grow in Pennsylvania. Southeast Pennsylvania has underserved human capital and infrastructure needed for job creation and economic growth. Investments in early childhood education, including affordable PreK and childcare for working and job training adults are one the most effective tools a community can utilize to promote economic development and workforce development. Constant training is a critical human capital process concerned with identifying future needs, developing a productive workforce, examining the skills of employees at all levels, and determining both strengths and skill gaps. Due to this, the Chamber supports programs that emphasize technical skills, business skills, trades, and vocational schooling,

In addition, many of our employers have experienced negative impacts to their workforce caused by the COVID pandemic and the ongoing opioid crisis, and the Chamber supports initiatives that address these crisis in an effort to bring employees back into the workforce as properly trained productive and healthy employees.

The Chamber supports an increase in the rates paid by the state to critical human services agencies, especially if the state adopts any increase to the minimum wage. Our membership feels that any minimum wage increase should not be applied to entry level, student and seasonal workers, but a living wage should be considered by the state for professional direct care workers with human services agencies.

Local Economic Vitality

Local government and its policies often have more impact on our communities than federal or state legislation, especially pertaining to economic vitality of a region and on the business community within a municipality. As was shown throughout the pandemic, partnerships between local businesses, the Chamber and our municipalities are key to a thriving regional economy. This can partnership can flourish by focusing on the following:

- Working to keep taxes low with fiscally responsible spending; and more modern, flexible tax options that keep up with inflation.
- Adopting comprehensive plans that include business priorities and focus on economic vitality.
- Engaging professional and informed staff who do not apply selective measures to the business community, but recognize the importance of local employers to the county's success.
 - Several of the Chamber's municipal members and partnerships can serve as a model. They have implemented permitting processes that are transparent, set clear expectations, with efficient timelines; and provide an overall positive experience to ensure that business community applicants satisfy municipal guidelines.
- Enacting and implementing appropriate land use regulations to allow businesses to locate and grow in Delaware County, with ordinances and regulations that keep up with changing state law and do not unintentionally supersede it, such as with the various amendments to the Municipal Code and Ordinance Compliance Act.
- Ensuring municipalities do not enact ordinances that supersede state laws especially regarding Municipal Code and Ordinance Compliance Act.
- Revitalizing business and shopping districts, including providing available, affordable public parking, safe access to public transit and increased bike/pedestrian access.