



Press Release

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Tennessee Chamber Adopts Legislative Business Agenda to Support Job Creation and Job Growth

The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry has adopted its annual *Business Agenda*, outlining the business community's pro-job, pro-growth legislative and policy priorities for 2005.

The Tennessee Chamber's *Business Agenda*, developed from the input of business and industry leaders across the state, advocates proactive solutions in areas such as health care, the environment, workers' compensation, taxes and workplace issues in Tennessee.

"The Business Agenda is a real effort by our state's employers to identify to the members of the General Assembly those areas that, if not addressed, can hamper job growth in Tennessee and to offer positive, meaningful solutions for their resolution," said Deborah K. Woolley, president of the Tennessee Chamber. "We surveyed our members statewide as well as local chamber members, we conducted several regional grass-roots meetings in cooperation with local chambers and we reviewed all suggestions through our volunteer committees and board of directors. The result is a meaningful collection of initiatives that will create a climate in which our businesses and industries can compete, grow and create new jobs."

The Tennessee Chamber's Business Agenda addresses seven distinct areas, either calling for legislative action or providing legislative parameters to protect and maintain a positive business climate:

Providing Affordable Health Care

- ✓ Supports TennCare reform without cost shifting to employers and employer-sponsored health insurance plans
- ✓ Support implementation and utilization of the cost-benefit analysis law as it relates to health insurance mandates
- ✓ Supports preserving managed care systems as option for employers and employees

Preserving Workers' Compensation Reform

- ✓ Supports the continued implementation of the 2004 workers' compensation reform package
- ✓ Supports a clear definition of a compensable accident and injury
- ✓ Seeks to ensure that fraud is eliminated or minimized in the workers' compensation system

Tort Reform

- ✓ Supports the adoption of meaningful tort reform measures

Fair Tax Climate

- ✓ Asks that any tax reform or tax change be comprehensive and not piecemeal, ensuring that there is balance and fairness among classes of taxpayers with no tax shifts to the business and industry community

Positive Employee Relations

- ✓ Supports preservation of the rights of Tennessee employees to work without being required to join or participate in a union
- ✓ Supports the right of Tennessee employees to determine union representation in a secret-ballot, federally conducted election
- ✓ Supports passage of legislation to prevent SUTA (State Unemployment Tax Act) Dumping while not adversely impacting legitimate mergers, acquisitions and divestitures
- ✓ Supports legislation to provide flexibility in certain regulatory acts to minimize the impact on small businesses

Environmental Stewardship

- ✓ Asks that any regulatory regulation be based on sound science, that state regulations not be more stringent than federal regulations, that regulations not create a cost-prohibitive burden, and that regulations encourage and support a growing economy

Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce

- ✓ Supports initiatives to provide training and training opportunities for the present-day workforce, including school-to-work programs
- ✓ Supports voluntary expansion of Tennessee's model Pre-K program
- ✓ Supports increased availability and flexibility of charter schools
- ✓ Supports creating a greater awareness of and commitment to higher education

"The Business Agenda represents what business and industry leaders do well." Woolley said. "They have identified problems or areas of concern and formulated workable solutions that will allow our economy to grow and our companies to create jobs."

The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry is the state's largest broad-based business and industry trade association, representing the interests of the state's employers to ensure that the economy grows and jobs can be created.

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This press release and the full 2005 Tennessee Chamber Business Agenda is available at www.tnchamber.org.