

# FEDERAL

2021

# AGENDA



**Springfield**  
Area Chamber of Commerce

[www.springfieldchamber.com](http://www.springfieldchamber.com)

# 2021 Legislative Priorities

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, located in Missouri's third largest city, represents more than 1,500 business and professional organizations.

The Chamber's public policy efforts are focused on impacting the business climate and helping to grow jobs, develop the workforce and drive investment in our region and our state.

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the Chamber has prioritized business assistance for COVID-19 response and recovery. The Chamber continues to be a leading voice for the Springfield region's businesses as they navigate the impact of the pandemic.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The federal government response to the coronavirus pandemic is critical to ensure economic recovery and stability.

### COVID-19 Liability

The Chamber supports safe harbor liability protections for businesses that have followed government health and safety guidelines during COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, as well as liability protections for manufacturers that produced Personal Protective Equipment, and for healthcare workers who provided medical care, when reasonable efforts were made to protect public health.

### Federal Support

The Chamber supports additional federal assistance for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as efforts to address negative tax implications and other issues with existing COVID-19 related federal programs. Additionally, the Chamber supports federal measures to rapidly address job training and retraining in response to the pandemic.

The Chamber also supports the continuation of efforts initiated in response to the coronavirus pandemic to ease applicable statutory and regulatory burdens to streamline processes and promote business efficiency.

The Chamber supports continued federal funding for adequate COVID-19 testing and contact tracing as well as support for the distribution of approved vaccines.

## BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A strong business climate is critical to the economic success of Missouri and the United States. Business growth creates jobs that support communities, families and individuals.

### Agribusiness

The Chamber supports policies that will strengthen domestic agriculture and food production, promote exports and ensure a safe and stable food supply.

### Entrepreneurial Support & Innovation

The Chamber supports programs that incentivize capital investment, small business assistance and access to early stage capital and support.

The Chamber encourages funding for IDEA Commons, including the Roy Blunt Jordan Valley Innovation Center (JVIC) and the Missouri State University efactory, to support private sector-led research and development and job creation.

### Equality of Opportunity

The Chamber supports efforts to improve access to capital for minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

### International Trade

The Chamber supports international trade policies that encourage economic development, reduce trade barriers, protect U.S. intellectual property, eliminate unfair trade practices, and protect national security. The Chamber also supports the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

## **BUSINESS CLIMATE**

### **Labor Relations**

The Chamber supports labor policies that enhance, not inhibit, economic growth and job creation.

The Chamber supports the right of workers to voluntarily join unions under fair and democratic rules but opposes legislation that would impose new and costly regulations on businesses or stifle productivity and economic growth.

### **Minimum Wage**

The Chamber opposes an increase of the minimum wage.

### **Prevailing Wage & Employee Classification**

The Chamber supports modifications to the existing Davis-Bacon Act in order to remove barriers for small business owners and contractors competing for federally funded projects.

The Chamber supports legislation that protects the legitimate use of independent contractors.

### **Fiscal Responsibility & Governance**

The Chamber supports a balanced federal budget and a reduced national debt.

### **Banking and Financial Regulatory Reform**

The Chamber supports measures that reduce regulatory burdens, particularly on community banks.

### **Able Age Adjustment**

The Chamber supports increasing the eligibility age of beneficiaries for ABLE accounts to the onset of disability before age 46.

### **Unfunded Mandates**

The Chamber opposes unfunded and underfunded federal legislative mandates.

### **ADA Reform**

The Chamber supports reform to the Americans with Disabilities Act by requiring prior written notice, from the claimant to the respondent, of the nature and location of any claimed violation and a reasonable opportunity to correct the violation before a claim for attorney fees can be made.

## **EDUCATION**

The Chamber supports continued investment in all levels of public education and workforce training. Developing the workforce through two- and four-year higher education systems, as well as alternative pathways including credentialing, apprenticeship programs and training, are all key to the region's success.

The Chamber supports modifying Pell Grants to allow funding for regionally accredited public two-year colleges to offer short-term workforce training.

The Chamber supports making the Second Chance Pell Experiment permanent. This program allows incarcerated individuals to receive Pell Grants to pursue degrees or credentials in order to increase employability and meet workforce needs.

The Chamber supports federal funding for facility construction, program development, and implementation of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Ozarks Technical Community College.

## **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

The Chamber supports balanced energy and environmental policies that are equitable to all regions and industries, foster innovation and economic growth, encourage energy sustainability, and consider quality of life.

The Chamber opposes policies that would unduly raise energy costs for business or jeopardize the creation of jobs. As Congress considers environmental and energy policy, it is crucial that states like Missouri are not put at an economic disadvantage because of limited ability to access abundant renewable options.

Environmental regulatory reform should focus on reducing administrative requirements, the economic burden of regulatory compliance, and should address conflicting compliance requirements between state and federal regulatory bodies.

## **FORT LEONARD WOOD**

The Chamber supports Fort Leonard Wood and the critical role it provides in the training and development of military personnel and for the economic development impact it has

on the state. The Chamber encourages policies to expand the base while protecting it from funding and personnel reductions.

The Chamber supports the efforts of Ozarks Technical Community College, Missouri State University and Drury University to expand training programs offered at Fort Leonard Wood.

## HEALTHCARE REFORM

The Chamber supports reduced federal mandates and the passage of professional liability and tort reform legislation that will lower the cost of patient care. The Chamber opposes placing an undue or uncertain amount of the cost of care on business and opposes health insurance mandates that undermine the ability of employers to provide competitive health insurance at an affordable cost.

## IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Chamber supports comprehensive immigration reform and a talent-oriented immigration policy that establishes an accurate employment eligibility confirmation system that provides a good faith “safe harbor” to employers, includes an efficient guest worker program, expands H-1B and H-2B visa issuance and employment-based green cards, addresses undocumented workers filling legitimate employment needs, and strengthens national security.

The Chamber supports the ability to address the healthcare worker shortage by removing unnecessary barriers that prevent providers from working in the United States, including the reauthorization of the Conrad J1 Visa Waiver to allow states to increase the number of physician waivers per fiscal year.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

The Chamber supports funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Program (COPS Hiring Program) to assist the Springfield Fire Department, the Springfield Police Department and surrounding departments in meeting critical staffing, equipment and resource needs.

## REGULATORY REFORM

The Chamber supports revising the regulatory process to require Congress to vote on new rules and regulations before they can take effect, raising the regulators’ burden of proof in court, and requiring independent review of major rules to verify necessity and potential for effective implementation.

## TAXATION

### Internet Sales Tax

The Chamber supports policies that level the playing field for all retailers and provide much-needed revenue to states.

### Tax Reform

Any proposed tax reform should increase certainty to the business community, encourage capital investment, simplify the tax code and be fiscally responsible.

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Chamber supports long- term sustainable funding for critical transportation and infrastructure projects.

The Chamber encourages continued support of partnerships between local, state, and federal entities that will maximize available dollars through collaborative efforts. The Chamber supports streamlining and reforming the permitting process for federal infrastructure projects.

The Chamber supports funding for broadband improvements.

### Multimodal

The Chamber supports operating assistance for the Springfield area’s transit systems, including investment in multimodal infrastructure, bus replacement and rail lines.

### Springfield-Branson National Airport

The Chamber advocates for increased funding for airports, including the FAA Passenger Facility Charge, to maintain airfield infrastructure and encourage growth in airline passengers, air cargo, general aviation, and flight training.

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