

PUBLIC POLICY

PRIORITIES
2021-2022



SUPPORT
OHIO
BUSINESSES



WE'RE ALL FOR OHIO.



Mission of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce

As the state's leading business advocate and resource, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce aggressively champions free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

For more than 127 years,

the Ohio Chamber of Commerce has been the voice of business and a champion of free enterprise at the Statehouse, seeking to promote public policy that strengthens Ohio's business climate.

We have been instrumental in passing significant reforms in the areas of tax policy, workers' compensation, and employer rights, as well as improving our legal climate and streamlining the regulatory process.

OUR POLICY SUCSESSES

have made Ohio more business friendly and more competitive, both nationally and globally. In fact, according to several different publications, Ohio ranked among the top 10 best states for business in the country in 2020.

*Nonetheless, more can be done to grow our economy and protect businesses, and these **2021-2022 Public Policy Priorities** represent an ambitious agenda that will further improve the business climate. Developed with input from over 800 leaders from across our membership that serve on one or more of our nine policy committees, we will use these legislative priorities to focus lawmakers' attention on the crucial areas that encourage job creation and enhance competitiveness.*



PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

CIVIL JUSTICE

The Ohio Chamber supports efforts to improve the legal climate in Ohio by promoting fairness and reducing liability and incentives for litigation.

Our priorities are to:

- Reduce Ohio's statute of limitation for written contracts.
- Ban the practice of third-party litigation financing for cases involving class actions.
- Defend against efforts to expand civil liability for employers and overturn monetary limits for damages in tort actions.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

The Ohio Chamber urges policies that meet the demands of today's workplace and respond to the needs of Ohio employers for qualified, well-trained employees.

Our priorities are to:

- Advocate for a financial literacy high school graduation requirement.
- Support increased efforts towards FAFSA completion for Ohioans.
- Strengthen school district Business Advisory Councils to assist in building a stronger relationship with local employers.
- Ensure the continuation of the TechCred Program.
- Continue efforts to alleviate the "benefits cliff."
- Explore opportunities to expand the workforce to help meet existing employer needs.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Chamber encourages energy policies that protect businesses' access to affordable, dependable energy and seeks environmental regulations based on sound science and comprehensive information.

Our priorities are to:

- Remove barriers to entry and push back against new barriers to entry for all energy sources.
- Support comprehensive reforms to Ohio's energy policy that both balances a diverse portfolio of energy sources and provides for reliable, affordable sources of energy.
- Continue to oppose all efforts that grant nature or specific ecosystems with judicially enforceable legal rights.
- Address the unintended consequences of newly-enacted water withdrawal requirements.
- Support remediation of brownfield properties and redevelopment of those properties to support economic development.
- Protect against costly federal environmental regulations and make sure state regulations are no more stringent than their federal counterparts.

HEALTH CARE

The Ohio Chamber seeks to lower the overall cost of health care so it is more affordable for employers.

Our priorities are to:

- Advocate for greater health care cost and quality transparency to effectively empower employers and consumers to be better purchasers.
- Oppose health insurance mandates.
- Codify ACA requirement that the state must defray actuarial cost of any new state-mandated benefits.
- Encourage utilization of technological advancements in health care delivery.
- Identify an appropriate role that employers can play in helping reduce health care disparities.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

The Ohio Chamber supports protecting employers from unfair and harmful workplace rules and mandates.

Our priorities are to:

- Address the long-term solvency of the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.
- Reduce the complexity and administrative burden of Ohio's unemployment compensation system.
- Defend against onerous government mandates that drive up labor costs.
- Continue to stress the need to ultimately make Ohio a right-to-work state.
- Reinforce employers' ability to make employment decisions based upon an individual's medical marijuana use.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Ohio Chamber seeks to preserve employers' ability to effectively advocate for policy solutions and engage in political activity.

Our priorities are to:

- Battle ballot initiatives proposed by anti-business special interest groups.
- Safeguard the Ohio Constitution by requiring broader public support for proposed amendments.
- Clarify and reinforce laws governing the ballot issue petition process.
- Preserve the First Amendment right of businesses to unrestricted political advocacy.

TAXES

The Ohio Chamber encourages a fair and equitable tax system that stimulates growth, innovation, and job creation.

Our priorities are to:

- Work to keep and improve the Business Income Deduction (BID).
- Reform the withholding requirements for pass-through entities.
- Repeal equity claw-back and clarify business income definition.
- Repeal the existing sales tax on employment services.
- Modernize and clarify the rules regarding what constitutes electronic information services and their sales and use tax treatment.
- Simplify municipal income tax compliance.
- Improve Ohio's grade on the Council on State Taxation (COST) Property Tax Administration Scorecard.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Ohio Chamber supports a workers' compensation system that runs efficiently and effectively and keeps premium costs competitive with other states' systems.

Our priorities are to:

- Ensure that non-medical benefits are only payable for loss of earning capacity.
- Establish performance, outcome, and cost metrics by which providers can be measured and ranked.
- Clarify when claimants receiving wage continuation may apply for permanent partial disability.
- Ensure employers are not unreasonably penalized for an employee's failure to attend medical or other appointments.
- Make claimants more responsible for their care.
- Guard against expansion of workers' compensation coverage to psychological-only claims.





OHIO SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Ohio Chamber knows that small businesses are powerful economic growth drivers and employ nearly half of the state's private sector workforce. While their concerns are the same as larger employers in many instances, some small business problems and priorities are unique.

OUR PRIORITIES ARE TO:

- Retain the Business Income Deduction (BID).
- Provide fairness to businesses as it relates to property taxes.
- Advocate for responsible, increased price transparency for health care services.
- Oppose policies such as health care mandates that contribute to the rising costs of health care.
- Support legislation that strengthens small business options when faced with unknown and/or uncertain regulations.
- Support the Common Sense Initiative (CSI) office and pursue attempts to expand their responsibilities.
- Support a fair and equitable plan for the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund to achieve solvency.



POLICY COMMITTEES

The Public Policy Committees are the lifeblood of the Ohio Chamber. They study the needs of Ohio's business community and establish the Ohio Chamber's position on key legislative issues and make policy recommendations to the board of directors.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

HEALTH CARE

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

OHIO SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TAXATION & PUBLIC EXPENDITURES

WORKERS' COMPENSATION





IN PURSUIT OF THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

To help address inequality and injustice in America, in June 2020 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce announced its Equality of Opportunity Agenda comprised of substantive policy recommendations and private sector solutions. The Ohio Chamber intends to be a leader by doing our part to drive policy action at the state level.

There are many barriers that hold back people of color in their efforts to obtain an education, secure a job, or start a business. Systemic inequalities hurt individuals, communities, our economy, and our society. Addressing them is the smart thing to do for our economy:

- Recognize that racism is a public health crisis and support a unified effort to addressing inequities.
- Support the continuation of the Diversity & Inclusion Technology Internship Program.
- Improve educational opportunities for the incarcerated.
- Develop entrepreneurial programs for reformed citizens.
- Reform occupational licensing restrictions and eliminate unnecessary occupational licenses.
- Encourage "Fair Chance" hiring and "Clean Slate" reforms.

HELPING BUSINESSES RECOVER FROM THE PANDEMIC

Before the arrival of the coronavirus, Ohio's economy was growing and business leader optimism was high. However, the suddenness of its emergence and the subsequent steps taken by Ohio to contain it upended our economy. The virus threatened both lives and livelihoods, and the economic fallout has been substantial for both Ohio workers and businesses.

Fortunately, Ohio's economy is showing signs of recovery. According to the Moody's/CNN "Back-to-Normal Index," at the end of 2020 Ohio's economy was operating at 79% of where it was in early March 2020 – making us the 22nd best state for economic recovery.

However, our members continue to face significant challenges, and a great deal of uncertainty remains. Because it's still not business-as-usual for our members, it can't be business-as-usual for the Ohio Chamber, either. Therefore, we will continue to prioritize a public policy response to the pandemic that seeks to assist employers in overcoming the economic disruptions caused by the virus and ensure the survival of as many businesses as possible.

- Align existing workforce training programs with new and different workforce challenges caused by COVID-19.
- Ease municipal tax withholding compliance burden for employers whose employees continue to work at various locations and not in the company office.
- Amend state wage and hour laws to clarify that de minimis amounts of time spent on electronic devices are not used when calculating overtime pay.
- Codify when work from home injuries are compensable.
- Support effective and timely administration of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Advocate that Ohio direct some of Ohio's federal coronavirus relief dollars towards shoring up the state's Unemployment Compensation Fund.
- Prevent employers from facing unreasonable civil liability in claims arising from COVID-19.



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