

## Tech Titans 2019 Legislative Agenda

Tech Titans is the largest trade association of technology companies in the State of Texas. Our members employ over 250,000 Texans. We believe that a passionate pursuit of technology creates the innovation and productivity that benefits the lives of Texans today and tomorrow.

### Economic Development

Texas has used the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Research & Development Tax Credit, and other tools to attract and retain technology companies, and to grow high-paying tech jobs and tech investment in Texas. Such incentives are required to remain competitive with other states and countries who are seeking these same outcomes.

- Support incentives that maintain competitiveness in Texas for corporate expansions, relocations and job growth, such as the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Texas Enterprise Zone Fund and tax incentives available under the Texas Economic Development Act under Chapters 312 and 313 of the Tax Code
- Support the Texas 2050 plan to enable long-term economic growth that accommodates our state's rapid population growth
- Encourage public and private investment in R&D through public funding for research at state laboratories and universities, tax incentives for business R&D, and innovative policies to accelerate technology transfers from lab to market

### Cybersecurity

- Support legislative programs that increase awareness of how small- and medium-sized businesses can protect themselves from cybersecurity threats
- Support businesses by establishing guidelines that provide safe harbors and reasonable defenses to Cyber Liability claims asserted against them
- Support policies that promote a robust and affordable Cyber Insurance market focused on the needs of small business and entrepreneurs
- Encourage businesses to develop and disclose comprehensive, market-driven privacy policies without creating a "patchwork-quilt" of state laws that would impede the growth of Internet commerce

### Workforce Development

The skills gap is a very real thing in Texas. Only 42 percent of Texans aged 25-34 years old have a college degree or work-related certificate, when studies show 60 percent of new jobs will require a workforce with such education and training by 2020.

- Support the Texas 60x30 Plan to achieve the goal of 60 percent of Texans aged 25-34 years old who will hold a postsecondary degree or certification by 2030
- Increase funding for Skills Development Fund grants to improve workforce training
- Support innovative and flexible career and technology education pathways in conjunction with public schools and community colleges to meet the needs of Texas employers
- Support tax incentives for companies offering an internship or apprenticeship for high school students in a recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway program, as well as similar programs for college students
- Increase K-12 funding and alternative certifications for more math and computer science teachers and STEM courses
- Support efforts to increase the supply of a skilled workforce for the cybersecurity sector, including public-private partnerships

### Technology

- Support policies that promote the deployment of efficient and effective infrastructure assets, including Information & Communications Technology (ICT), broadband and 5G wireless service, to help build the capacity needed to accommodate our state's growing population and help Texas remain competitive with other states
- Oppose any attempt to apply state regulation to Internet services or providers that would deter innovation or reduce competition among broadband networks

### **Public Education**

Our Texas economy is highly dependent upon the production of well-educated students who have a rigorous high school curriculum, for the benefit of all industries.

Public education programs focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are critical to increasing the pipeline of talented students who will pursue careers in technology, and teachers who will teach them.

- Reform school finance and increase funding for public schools by increasing the basic allotment, and by adjusting weights and formulas to increase state contribution to at least 50 percent over a period of years
- Expand access to rigorous science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) courses and qualified STEM educators in K-12 classes to improve the quality of education and prepare our future workforce
- Support measures that give school districts the flexibility to meet their students' needs
- Increase funding for public education STEM programs that produce talented students who pursue careers in technology, including U-TEACH, T-STEM and P-TECH academies

### **Budget & Tax**

- Access the Rainy Day Fund to address urgent budget needs such as Hurricane Harvey relief and increasing K-12 funding
- Oppose property tax policies that place additional burdens on businesses, including a split roll tax

### **Higher Education**

Texas universities and community colleges are educating students and building their skills in the industries that are critical to sustaining Texas economic prosperity. The continued success of Texas high-tech industries depends on an educated workforce that is prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow, as well as the cultivation and prevalence of Tier One research universities that work with industry.

- Support policies and concepts that will facilitate the development of new Tier One universities in Texas, including the Governor's University Research Initiative (GURI) to attract renowned or emerging researchers
- Fully fund the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) to leverage private donations for innovative research at state universities and colleges, including the \$156 million backlog of unpaid funds
- Support policies that promote and leverage partnerships between private industry and academia to bridge the gap between innovation occurring at Texas universities and the marketplace, including pilot "proof of concept" funding to accelerate university tech transfer and commercialization
- Issue tuition revenue bonds to fund building construction and renovations at our growing universities
- Support the Engineering for Life initiative at UT Dallas by matching the \$4 million from private industry with \$4 million in UT Dallas funding to fuel innovations in the state's high technology sector