



**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION

# 2019

## FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION PLAN

Presented to the 116th Congress  
by the 2019 Bryan/College Station  
Chamber of Commerce Delegation

**Economic Development • Fiscal Responsibility • Healthcare  
Higher Education & Workforce Training • Transportation • Regulatory & Tax Burdens on Business**

# 2019 FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce has as its foremost mission the continuation and cultivation of a vigorous and diverse local economy. Through its many programs, the Chamber enhances the ability of companies in the Brazos Valley to grow and prosper. One of the most important roles of our Chamber is to take a proactive approach to ensure that those who represent us nationally in Washington, D.C., state-wide in Austin and locally in Bryan/College Station learn more about the business interests of our community.

The purpose of this Federal Legislative Action Plan is to summarize the important legislative goals in the areas of concern to our 1,500 plus members and our community. We respectfully request your support on the issues outlined in this plan.

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Vicki Reim  
Chairman of the Board



**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
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Glen Brewer  
President & CEO

# LATIVE ACTION PLAN

The Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce advocates for businesses at the local, state and national levels. The Chamber uses guiding principles in considering positions on issues. At the heart of these principles is the certainty that the strength of a nation, a state and a community is a reflection of the strength of their economies. Wealth and jobs are created through economic development in a free society by means of free enterprise. Businesses, especially small businesses, are the engines that drive economic growth and rely on an atmosphere conducive to that growth.

"When businesses succeed, our non-profits, schools and civic organizations flourish and our governments provide better services for all of our residents. That is the economic cycle that creates the wonderful community in which we all work and live."

- Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Federal policies that encourage economic development are critical. We encourage lawmakers to facilitate economic success and quality of life by implementing more localized decision making, returning control to the state and local levels.**

## **We support:**

1. Enacting comprehensive immigration reform that rewards legal immigration and fosters economic growth, protects our borders, and eliminates loopholes that encourage illegal entry.
2. Enhancing fair and equitable international trade agreements and activities which benefit all parties, creating jobs and wealth while increasing cooperation and understanding.
3. Implementing the national cybersecurity framework by the most effective and rapid means to prepare the cyber security workforce, reduce vulnerabilities, prepare for cyber incidents, and make our critical infrastructure and the nation more secure and resilient.
4. Continuing policies that secure energy independence, encourage energy exports, and enable innovation in diverse energy sources. Continuing to rebuild national defense to increase U.S. influence and credibility globally while keeping the promises made to our military.





5. Maintaining current procedures and increasing funding for federal economic development programs such as: Community Development Block Grant funds, Economic Development Administration grants, New Market Tax Credits, Historically Underutilized Business Zones, and Opportunity Zones.

6. Investing in new and repairing existing critical national and state infrastructure. Continuing the current tax exempt status of municipal bonds to allow state and local governments to afford to build and maintain critical infrastructure and employ those who perform that important function.

7. Building and supporting a qualified workforce by investing funds at the state and regional service area levels which will target vocational and technical training and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs to meet local employers' needs.





# FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Our membership continues to be concerned about the rate of spending which required the government to borrow just over 19 cents of every dollar it spent in 2018. This spending behavior leads to an increase in the federal debt and slows the growth of the U.S. economy, ultimately damaging the potential for a prosperous business climate.**

## **We support:**

1. Implementing and maintaining a balanced budget policy.
2. Reforming Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and all other government programs in a way that will lead to long-term sustainability.
3. Creating and enforcing policies to reduce waste, fraud and duplication of federal programs.



# HEALTHCARE

**Americans continue to expect a healthcare system that provides choice for coverage options and providers; focuses on improving the experience of care; improves the health of the population; reduces the per capita cost of health care; and ensures financial stability for individuals and businesses. Successful healthcare reform requires Congress to build upon the strengths of public/private partnerships to achieve a bipartisan, workable health reform solution which places the needs of the American people first.**

## **We support:**

1. Maintaining the current tax deductibility of employer sponsored health plans while working to reform the healthcare system so that all citizens are invested in and have access to safe, affordable, understandable and comprehensive health services, reducing the number of uninsured citizens, and developing clear plans to improve the health of our citizens.
2. Promoting healthcare equity, equality and liberation by supporting programs and other financial mechanisms that sustain rural, endangered healthcare providers, public health departments, and community health centers with Preventive Health and Services Block grants from The Center for Disease Control.
3. Extending the 340B drug pricing program for hospitals and public health departments and centers serving low income citizens and identify ways to curb the cost of prescription drugs and occasional drug shortages.
4. Expanding coverage and services for behavioral health by improving the network of crisis stabilization, outpatient and inpatient programs.
5. Expanding Graduate Medical Education opportunities by maintaining the current funding system and endorsing HR 647, the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act.
6. Reforming the current Stark Law to foster greater working relationships between hospitals and physicians to accomplish value-based care, define key elements of compensation exceptions and focus on reducing regulations to reduce the per capita costs.

# HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE TRAINING

**An educated workforce is vital to the economic growth and vitality of American families and every community. The educational partnerships of Blinn College, Texas A&M University, the Bryan/College Station business community, local governments, K-12 education and nonprofits are working to share the responsibility of developing a dynamic and diverse local economy, productive citizens and new technology advancements. Reducing federal mandates and enhancing federal funding for research, innovation and workforce training will ensure future success of the Brazos Valley.**

## **We support:**

1. Strengthening America's commitment to post-secondary education for all by funding programs dedicated to supporting and expanding innovative community colleges, trade schools, veterans training, student financial aid, tier one research universities and industry partnerships.
2. Increasing annual budgets for competitive grants for research initiatives that will maintain American competitiveness in the world, particularly sponsored research programs of the National Science Foundation, National Institute for Standards & Technology, National Institute for Health and extramural research at mission agencies.







3. Enhancing federal funding activities which produce invaluable economic impact through the creation and commercialization of research into new technologies, which will lead to new business, innovative solutions, quality jobs and highly skilled workforce.

4. Reducing unfunded mandates from federal agencies that reduce incentives for education innovation, commercialization and partnership collaborations.

5. Developing broader commitments from mission agencies for apprenticeship programs and increasing funding for the Advanced Technological Education program of the National Science Foundation which improves inclusion of community colleges in efforts to bolster Americas' competitiveness in STEM fields.



# TRANSPORTATION

**Transportation impacts every aspect of daily life, and the U.S. infrastructure is constantly strained. The priority for infrastructure must not only be its maintenance, but is must also allow for innovation and expansion in areas of high growth when rapid economic development and population expansion occur.**

## **We support:**

1. Appropriating funds for planning and developing I-14 extending westward to Midland/Odessa and eastward to I-45 and to the Louisiana border, and a congressional designation of the outer highway loop on the Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2050 Major Thoroughfare Concept as Future Interstate 214.
2. Developing new, equitable funding mechanisms such as a vehicle motor tax and/or increasing the fuel tax to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund.
3. Increasing federal infrastructure funding that will address locally prioritized transportation needs.
4. Developing innovative regulations complementary to high speed rail and ensure the Federal Railroad Administration and USDOT support for safe, sustainable and privately funded high speed rail.
5. Developing funding and regulatory actions to speed research and application of technology that will expand transportation options including artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, public transit and smart infrastructure.
6. Streamlining of federal permitting processes for infrastructure development.



# REGULATORY & TAX BURDENS ON BUSINESS



**Reducing the regulatory burden on businesses is a must. The rules are unbalanced, placing unreasonable burdens on business that stifle innovation and affect growth and jobs. While 2018 offered advances, more changes are still necessary.**

## **We support:**

1. Implementing comprehensive tax reforms to help U.S. companies better compete in the global marketplace, such as lowering tax rates and reducing taxation of repatriated funds.
2. Provide relief for small business from the definition of a tax shelter to ensure that they will qualify for the small business-simplifying provisions available under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).
3. Passing the Technical Corrections to the 2017 TCJA and other recent legislation.
4. Reducing regulations in order to increase energy production from federal lands with revenues dedicated to infrastructure development.
5. Replacing or amending the Dodd-Frank Wall Street and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, to reduce the cost and complexity of compliance for employers and allow banks to start lending again
6. Eliminating unfunded mandates on state and local governments.

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For more information, or to receive an electronic copy of this  
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