

Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce
Policy Position Statements
2011

Local Business & Industry Policy Position. The Chamber supports local ordinances, policies and regulations that are pro-business and the removal/modification of those ordinances that don't benefit the community as much as they unnecessarily restrict businesses and small businesses. The Chamber supports development initiatives enhancing our community's ability to retain and attract business and industry capable of employing, at competitive salaries, the graduates of our local schools and colleges. The Chamber also supports the attraction of amenity-seeking retirees, including talented professionals seeking opportunities to supplement retirement income. The Chamber strongly supports the development and use of programs specifically designed to acquaint and educate current and future members of the local work force with the expectations and requirements of local employers, from professional demeanor to the value of a strong work ethic.

Health Care Policy Position. The Chamber supports legislative efforts to stabilize and enhance the trauma care network. The network should be supported either by existing government funds or additional revenue sources which are dedicated, predictable, broadly imposed and government-collected. Further, the allocation of such funds should be made in accordance with the formula established by the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission. The Chamber supports public and private funding options for safety net clinics that provide access to health care for the working uninsured to ensure that present and future needs are met. The Chamber supports monitoring and protecting the important legal and civil justice reforms that were adopted in 2005 including the requirement to prove gross negligence with regard to emergency room liability, the elimination of joint and several liability and provisions to discourage frivolous litigation. The Chamber supports caps on non-economic damages and opposes legislation that further weakens the reforms of 2005 and supports the reduction of the rapid growth of medical liability awards and insurance costs. The Chamber supports the creation of insurance products and the development of health information technology that provide incentives to reward healthy lifestyles and quality information system so consumers have full access to information with appropriate consideration for cost effectiveness.

Economic Development & Taxation Policy Position. The Chamber supports pro-business economic and tax policies that encourage economic growth, entrepreneurship and prosperity for our community. Economic and tax policies must allow favorable competition on regional, state, national and global levels to encourage the location and expansion of business and industry to our community. The Chamber supports the free enterprise system and opposes government regulations that are burdensome. We recognize that government needs to foster an environment where capitalism can flourish by creating an atmosphere that does not restrict economic growth by imposing excessive taxes, fees and regulations on industry and business, but spurs future job growth and expansion.

Transportation Policy Position. The Chamber acknowledges that our local employers and employees depend on Georgia's ports, highways, railroads, and airports to meet the needs of their customers, and that our local business community benefits as the regional business center for this portion of Georgia. The Chamber supports a multimodal transportation network that is attractive for private business and employees locally, regionally, and statewide. The transportation system should create conditions that encourage business opportunities, growth and success. The Chamber supports increased, dedicated, and sustainable funding sources for transportation capital improvements, operations and maintenance. Funding mechanisms should provide for local input and control in determining appropriate local and regional transportation needs.

Energy & Environment Policy Position. To ensure that our Energy and Environmental needs are met, bolster our economy, and enhance our national security, the Chamber supports the development of a balanced, sustainable, reliable and affordable solution to our current and future energy and environmental needs.

Education Policy Position. The Chamber supports establishing one communitywide vision for education excellence and workforce development. To have a world class workforce, we need a community that is undivided and committed to providing a world class education that can compete with the best in the world (not just Georgia). Implementation should include strategies that link education and workforce development in a seamless manner, preparing a student for whatever future they might choose and ensuring the long-term viability of our local economy. The Chamber's goal is to build the best workforce and ensure our companies have the talent they need to stay competitive.

Business & Industry Policy Position. The Business and Industry Policy Committee was formed to support, retain and nurture existing businesses and industry, and to attract and grow targeted new industries and businesses, principally through the support of legislation and initiatives at the State and Federal levels. In particular the committee seeks to encourage measures relating to labor, workers' compensation and unemployment laws and regulations that enhance the viability and profitability of business and industry. It is the committee's policy to advocate for increased access to capital and other incentives including tax based incentives that will promote economic development, to protect and strengthen Georgia's right to work laws, to promote safe and productive work environments, to pursue reforms to state and federal legislation and regulations affecting industry, to support immigration laws which take into account employers needs to have access to both skilled and unskilled labor, and to generally promote legislative and regulatory reforms that allow market force principles to work and guide Valdosta-Lowndes County businesses and industry.

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