



2023-2024

# PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

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 **TOLEDO REGIONAL**  
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce represents more than 2,000 businesses and more than 130,000 jobs throughout northwest Ohio.



The Chamber will:

- advocate on behalf of its members to contain the cost of doing business by working with local, state and federal government officials to improve the business climate to promote economic development;
- be a convener to address regional problems and create opportunities for success; and
- advise lawmakers about the impact of new laws or regulations on the region's ability to compete in a global economy and provide jobs.

Legislative votes on these issues and others of interest to the business community may result in being identified as a "key vote."

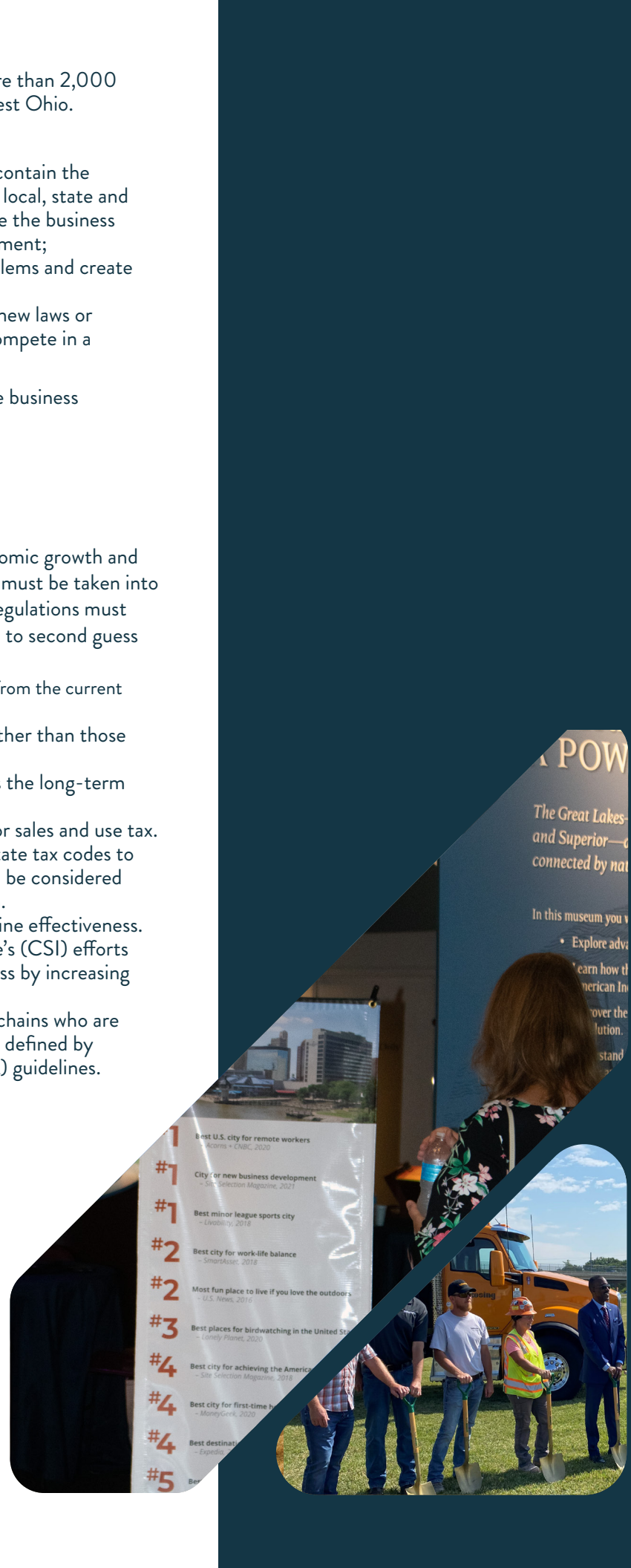
## TAXES and REGULATORY REFORM

The Chamber believes that tax policies should promote economic growth and job creation. The overall impact on business competitiveness must be taken into account when considering changes to tax policy. Rules and regulations must be clear and easily complied with; businesses should not have to second guess whether or not they are in compliance.

- Oppose efforts to modify the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) from the current rate of 0.26%.
- Promote policies that focus on increasing the tax base, rather than those that are revenue neutral as a result of tax-shifting.
- Support implementation of a balanced solution to address the long-term solvency of the unemployment compensation system.
- Support simplification of the manufacturing exemption for sales and use tax.
- Support efforts to achieve consistency among local and state tax codes to allow for easier compliance. Among the issues that should be considered include local income tax and state sales tax administration.
- Support the continued review of tax incentives to determine effectiveness.
- Support the continuation of the Common Sense Initiative's (CSI) efforts to identify and reduce regulatory burdens on small business by increasing outreach to the small business community.
- Support incentives to attract businesses and their supply chains who are involved in the manufacturing of critical infrastructure, as defined by Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) guidelines.

## MILITARY and FEDERAL ASSETS

Military and federal facilities contribute more than \$250 million of economic impact annually to the Toledo region. The Chamber will advocate for policies that promote and support federal and military installations in the region. This includes, but is not limited to, the opportunity for local organizations to seek state funding in the event of another Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round or other programmatic changes to assist in communicating the economic and national security interests of the federal or military installation. Efforts will be made to inform key stakeholders about the unintended consequences of encroachment and/or creating uncertainty at or near these facilities.







## TRANSPORTATION

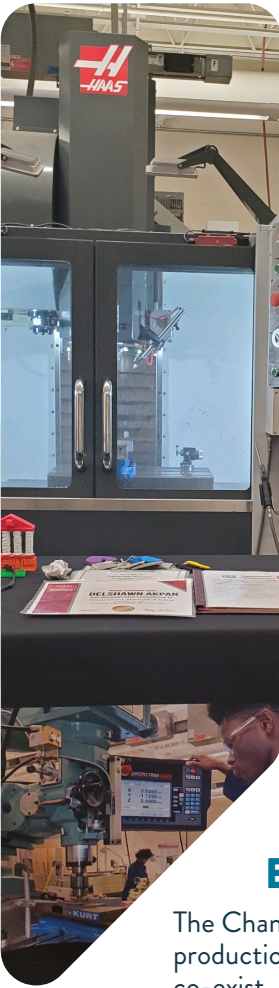
The Toledo region is within a day's drive of more than 100 million customers in the United States and Canadian markets. It is necessary to maintain and further enhance an efficient transportation system to move people, goods and materials. An efficient transportation system is key to promoting economic development in the region.

- Support the creation of a free-flow connection between Northwest Ohio and Central Ohio to promote safety and economic development. All options for construction, financing, and operation should be considered.
- Support efforts to develop a long-term solution for transportation infrastructure funding that take into account the various modes of transportation and fuel sources.
- Promote the use of multimodal transportation and maintain, improve and expand transportation infrastructure to advance the safety and economic vitality of the Toledo Region. This should include enhancements to the Soo Locks and the Brent Spence Bridge in order to maintain access to critical supply lines.
- Support the construction and completion of the I-475 expansion in Toledo and Wood County and the new interchange at 20A.
- Support an efficient, robust and responsive transit system that promotes the economic well-being of the region.
- Support reliable, long-term funding for infrastructure impacting the state's air and sea ports.

## WORKPLACE REGULATIONS

Regulations impacting the workplace not only affect the region's employers' ability to compete in the US market, but in the world market as well. Government at all levels has a duty to preserve fair and safe working conditions. The region's jobs can best be supported by ensuring that laws and regulations do not impose a burden that inhibits job providers from producing quality products and services at competitive prices.

- Safeguard the Ohio Constitution, therefore providing predictability and consistency for businesses, by requiring broader public support for amendments.
- Support efforts to combat drug addiction and other barriers to employment by better streamlining and coordination to maximize resources and avoid duplication of services.
- Encourage the alignment and uniformity of workplace regulations with other states.
- Support legislation which protects the rights of employers.
- Support liability protection for businesses complying with guidelines in response to public health emergencies.



## ENERGY and ENVIRONMENT

The Chamber believes that energy production and a clean environment can co-exist. Environmental and energy policies should be based on sound, cost effective scientific principles that will enhance job creation in the region.

- Support policies and public-private initiatives that ensure the long-term health of Lake Erie and its watershed. Public-private initiatives that stimulate economic development should be encouraged.
- Encourage the development and maintenance of infrastructure to support the delivery of available fuel sources. This includes Line 5 which is critical to the economic and energy needs of our region.
- Encourage the development and implementation of a statewide “all of the above” energy strategy. This strategy should utilize existing sources and encourage the development and use of advanced and renewable energy sources that maintain an economic balance and encourage economic development.
- Encourage reducing the regulatory burden on the production and generation of renewable energy sources. This should include siting standards that are predictable and uniform across Ohio.
- Support the implementation of strategies that strengthen recycling programs across the state in a cost-effective way to create a competitive advantage for Ohio manufacturers.
- Support funding and policies which promote the redevelopment of brownfield sites including structures.

## WORKFORCE and EDUCATION

The Chamber is actively working to support workforce development efforts and awareness of career opportunities as part of the overall strategy to attract and retain talent in the Toledo region. Our region’s employers must have the skilled employees necessary to sustain and grow their business and programs that are responsive to their needs. The Chamber has a stated goal that every student graduating from high school should have the necessary skills to become employed, enrolled in additional training or higher education, or enlisted in the defense of our nation.

- Support policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion so that businesses can attract and retain the necessary workforce. This includes efforts to support practices around fair chance hiring, veterans, and other underrepresented communities.
- Promote policies that enable individuals to enter and advance in the workplace without the fear of the immediate loss of benefits necessary to provide for their family – also known as the “benefits cliff.”
- Support policies and incentives that close the skills gap between Ohio’s workers and its employment needs. This should include the development of programs which encourage employers to provide secondary and post-secondary students with internship, apprenticeship and industry certification opportunities.
- Support implementation of consistent and rigorous K-12 education and graduation standards.
- Support enhancement of career tech and higher education programs and continued funding to ensure that the training needs for existing and emerging industries are met.
- Support policies that enhance early childhood learning and Pre-K educational opportunities. This includes ensuring that resources are available to assist guardians in securing childcare to remain in the workforce.
- Encourage state and local governments to avoid unnecessary and duplicative professional licensing requirements, including the recognition of licenses obtained in other states that comply with state and local requirements.

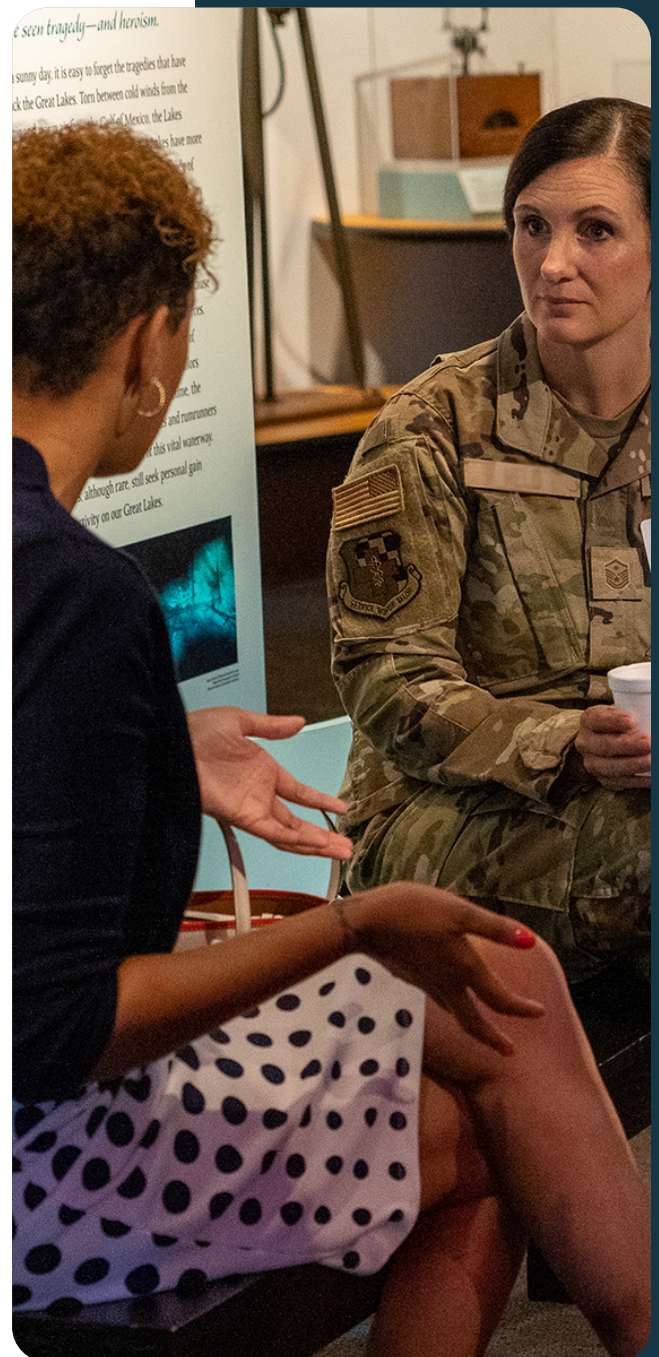




## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government should be efficient and responsive to the needs of its businesses and residents. The Chamber is committed to working with local governments to identify best practices, operational efficiencies, and collaborative efforts to provide necessary services with the goal of reducing the overall burden on the taxpayer. We expect that local governments will increase transparency about their sources of revenue and the costs of operations. Taxpayers should be treated as customers.

- Local government and other public entities should implement policies, as permitted by existing law, to further enhance the purchase of goods and services from businesses located within the Toledo region.
- Advocate for policies that encourage the development of public-private, public-public (P4) partnerships.
- Local governments should seek to combine common services and internal operations to achieve efficiencies and cost-savings while being more responsive to their customers' needs.
- The region's drinking water systems must be transparent about their operation, implement industry best management practices, use cost-of-service based rates, and establish a redundant water source and treatment process. The protection of health and safety should include programs for the full replacement of lead service lines, low-income assistance, and appropriate minimum usage levels.
- Support the establishment of a business gateway for obtaining local permits and licenses in a single location.
- Entities receiving support through local taxes should identify operational efficiencies and collaborative opportunities, public and private, before seeking increased taxpayer support.
- Encourage local governments to incorporate the principles of Ohio's Common Sense Initiative into their own decision-making. Factors such as the cost and ease of compliance, and the potential for duplicative or unenforceable regulations, should be considered when reviewing proposed or updated ordinances and regulations.
- Encourage local zoning policies that promote economic and workforce development opportunities.



## THE POLICY PROCESS

The foundation of the Chamber's policy process is the Government Affairs Committee, supported by a group of issue-oriented subcommittees, which are open to all Chamber members. Subcommittees focus on the following policy areas: sustainability efforts, taxes and tax burden, workplace regulations, and public infrastructure.

Each subcommittee reports to the Chamber's Government Affairs Committee, which in turn makes recommendations to the Chamber's Board of Trustees and/or the Toledo Area Small Business Association (TASBA) board of directors. The Chamber Board and the TASBA Board may choose to take differing opinions on the issues before them. This ensures that the policies of the Chamber are representative of the membership at large.

## MEMBER PARTICIPATION

The success of the Chamber's efforts to influence public policy is dependent upon a strong commitment by its members to participate in the process. If you are interested in getting more involved or have a special interest in one of the topics in this agenda, call the Advocacy & Public Policy Department at 419-243-8191.

## ADVOCACY & PUBLIC POLICY SERVICES

This Public Policy Agenda is only one of the many services the Chamber's Advocacy & Public Policy (APP) Department offers to its members. APP also:

- Informs members about pending legislation, regulations, and election issues through the Chamber's weekly newsletter and social media outlets.
- Provides status reports and copies of specific pieces of legislation.
- Reviews tax levy requests/issues.
- Assists members in preparing testimony or comments on proposed legislation or rules.
- Advocates for policies and laws which favor business growth through testimony before legislative bodies and participation in ad-hoc coalitions.
- Offers opportunities to network with elected and other government officials through Government Affairs Committee meetings and legislative events.
- Provides opportunities for Chamber members to learn more about compliance with various government mandates.

## ADVOCACY & PUBLIC POLICY STAFF

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