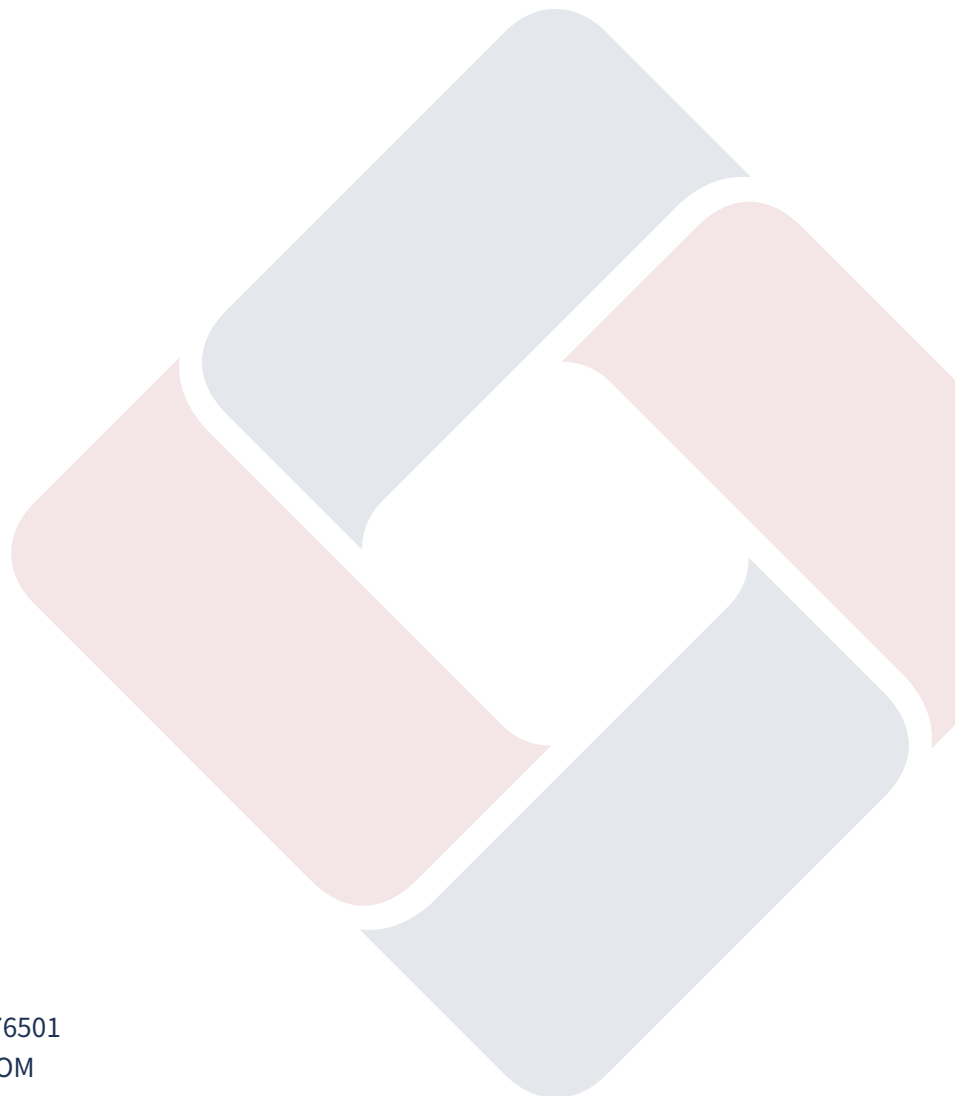




2019-20 Public Policy Legislative Agenda

YOUR BUSINESS! YOUR COMMUNITY! YOUR CHAMBER!



Guiding Principles



Public Policy influences business success, workforce development, economic growth and quality of place. The Temple Chamber of Commerce engages in advocacy in support of the business community by engaging, advocating and promoting initiatives, partnerships and public policy positions to preserve, protect and promote a business-friendly environment free of obstacles to growth and development.

Guiding Principles

The Temple Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors adopted the following Guiding Principles to sharpen and expedite public policy action. The Public Policy Council may act on legislative and regulatory issues consistent with the following:

- Promotion and enhancement of the region's key economic sectors including health care, military/defense, hospitality, manufacturing, real estate, construction, retail, knowledge based and service industries
- Flexibility in healthcare related benefits for employers; access to quality and efficient healthcare that also promotes wellness; encouraging personal responsibility and personal accountability to help avoid unnecessary healthcare costs
- Comprehensively planned, constructed, and well-maintained infrastructure as a key to long-term economic development
- Embracing the fundamentals of the Free Enterprise System
- Collaborative, cost-effective solutions to regional infrastructure challenges
- Economic development initiatives which enhance the competitiveness of new and existing businesses
- Public education system to prepare all students to be successful in the workplace or in post-secondary education; creative, equitable and adequate funding methods to ensure that our region's public-school systems and high education institutions can continue to excel
- Initiatives to enhance the areas skilled workforce; enhance lifelong educational opportunities
- Equity in tax and fee structures, regulations and administrative procedures that produce positive economic growth and opportunity in the region
- Privatization and consolidation of services throughout the region when these actions are in the best interest of the public and economic growth of the area
- High quality, cost-effective government services offered in a manner conducive to the growth of competitive businesses
- Promotion of a sustainable expansion of the Central Texas military and defense industry
- Encourage business-minded individuals, knowledgeable of the community's vision and needs, to seek election to public office
- Equal opportunity for all citizens
- Reasonable actions to protect and conserve the environment

Business Advocacy

- Support the fundamental principles of the Free Enterprise System
- Oppose burdensome legislation and regulations imposed upon business
- Support public sector initiatives to enhance business growth & development
- Support equal opportunity for all citizens



Transportation

- Stay engaged in efforts to finalize the expansion of Interstate 35 in Bell County
- Support the designation and expansion of I-14, The Gulf Coast Strategic Highway, from I-35 utilizing existing US 190 through Temple and east to Milam County
- Advocate growth opportunities at Draughon-Miller Temple Regional Airport
- Support railroad safety and noise reduction measures
- Support continued funding and development of enhanced and expanded rail service and infrastructure, both passenger and freight, through Temple
- Support improved highways, port of entry and other infrastructures that improve the safe, effective and efficient flow of products, goods, services and people, promote tourism and increase public safety and funding



Public Finance and Tax Policy

- Support the development of a fair, equitable and transparent system for the administration and assessment of property taxes
- Support efforts to analyze local government expenditures to ensure sound and efficient use of public funds
- We support local government control. We recognize our local government officials are fiscally responsible and are in the best position to know what the community needs and desires
- We support local government control to determine and establish the revenue and expense requirements without the imposition of an unrealistic, more restrictive “one-size” fits all revenue cap
- Support increasing the relief and elimination of the franchise (margin) fee upon business
- Support legislation requiring State Comptroller to provide an assessment of the financial impact of any legislation upon local entities
- Oppose unfunded mandates and eliminate the practice of shifting the burden of financing programs to other layers of government or the private sector



National Security & Defense

- Work with the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance to enhance the military presence in Central Texas
- Provide opportunities to inform, educate and communicate developments related and impactful upon the armed forces in Central Texas due to Base Realignment and Closure
- Support continued enhancement and expansion of the Texas Army National Guard in Temple
- Support licensing reciprocity for those transitioning out of the military and military family members



Healthcare

- Support and encourage establishment of initiatives to cultivate and nurture healthy behaviors and attitudes at work and home
- Seek healthcare solutions to maximize local value, resisting attempts to burden employers with mandated benefits
- Support increased of the Graduate Medical Education funding for existing and new residency programs, and the protection of funding for trauma care facilities



Economic/Community Development

- Support reauthorization of property tax exemptions for economic development projects, commonly referred to as Chapter 312
- Support the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)
- Support creation and continuation of public sector initiatives to enhance business expansion
- Support local government efforts to seek federal grants to enhance the quality of place
- Support improvement and expansion of Bell County venues for the attraction of events, conventions, and activities that draw visitors and increases the use of business services
- Support efforts to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit through creation of new businesses
- Support continuation of the Texas Enterprise Fund (TEF) to assist in attraction of business
- Support development of initiatives, programs and incentives to encourage and enhance the growth of small business
- Support enhancement of government procurement opportunities
- Support continuation of the annual “Free Sales Tax Weekend” for back-to-school purchases with consideration for an increased inventory of allowable items



Workforce Development & Education

- Support career and technology education in conjunction with public schools and community colleges where appropriate to meet the needs of Texas employers
- Support and encourage enhancement of Career Education strands
- Support workforce initiatives and partnerships to stimulate business growth
- Support development of public/private partnerships to deliver job training opportunities
- Support legislation which improves the school finance system to ensure all students receive an adequate and equitable education
- Support funding based on average daily enrollment only if the State increases funding to schools
- Support funding of full-day Pre-K programs for all school districts for eligible students
- Support the reduction of time and resources spent on high-stakes testing and de-emphasizing the utilization of standardized testing as the primary means for measuring student achievement, educator effectiveness or school performance
- Support legislation to provide incentives to encourage business participation in education and workforce development initiatives
- Support incentives that reward the collaboration of high schools with community colleges and universities to expand dual credit opportunities



Energy/Water

- Support legislation that protects the rights of Central Texas to maintain control of historical water rights
- Support healthy economic growth in Texas by promoting the production of adequate supplies of all forms of energy at competitive prices
- Encourage business friendly legislation that encourages and incentivizes the conservation of resources
- Oppose the use of energy subsidies that distort market economics

