



2021 Jonesboro Regional Chamber Legislative Agenda

The Governmental Affairs committee is pleased to present the 2021 Legislative Agenda of the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber represents about 1,400 businesses of all types from the region and has as a goal to serve as the public policy monitor for our members.

Workforce Quality and Education

- Support efforts that seek to develop, retain, expand and attract a globally competitive workforce.
- Support the prioritization of immediate Reading Readiness for all PreK-12 students, except those precluded by intellectual disability.
- Support development of a "continuous learning system" with competency-based pathways in K-12 education, career technical education, higher education, and the workforce.
- Link Career Technical Education funding to market demand (e.g. high wage industry needs) and student results (e.g. employment, completion).

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Support providing the Arkansas Department of Transportation with sufficient revenue to maintain safe highways.
- Support development and expansion of rural broadband.

Healthcare

- Identify and support reasonable efforts that seek to reduce employers' healthcare costs.
- Monitor healthcare-related legislation, determine its impact on employers and respond accordingly.
- Support legislation that stabilizes or reduces healthcare costs to employers.
- Support legislation that provides employers stable and reasonable pharmacy costs.
- Support UAMS' pursuit of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation for the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.
- Support legislative and other efforts to address opioid and other substance use disorders and their negative impact on the workplace.
- Support multidiscipline telemedicine and digital access across the state that enhances access to healthcare services and reduces employers' healthcare costs.
- Support efforts to expand access to healthcare across the state.
- Support expansion of healthcare education and workforce initiatives.

Taxation

- Oppose measures that would unfairly shift tax burden to business and industry, thereby making Arkansas less competitive for investments and jobs.
- Oppose any erosion of tax base that does not promote economic development.
- Support the state's three-pronged tax system of property taxes, income taxes and sales taxes.
- Favor the current legal requirements for passage of taxes.

Business Incentives

- Monitor attempts to update or repeal business incentives enacted over the years and work to ensure that no incentives are eliminated that are deemed necessary by specific businesses or industries.
- Support reforms to make incentives compliance less burdensome so long as the incentives retain their value.
- Support refundability of incentive tax credits when feasible.
- Support creation or enhancement of an incentive to attract knowledge workers.

Unemployment Insurance

- Assure that Arkansas has competitive laws on drug testing.
- Improve Department of Workforce Development hearing notice and procedures.
- Improve integrity of unemployment insurance program.
- Oppose any legislation that is a detrimental to a sound unemployment compensation system.

Workers' Compensation

- Protect the workers' compensation reforms enacted by Act 796 of 1993.
- Identify and support efforts to mitigate the impact on employers arising from the closing of claims by the Death and Permanent Total Disability Trust Fund.