

The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce



2008 Legislative Agenda

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It is one of the many objectives of the Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce to advocate for our members as it relates to Federal, State and local government agendas. Many of the laws that are presented have a major impact on the business community. Therefore, it is important for you to know that your Chamber has taken a stand on your behalf by urging elected officials to support and defend your interests and the interests of the entire business community.

★ Federal Issues ★

The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce SUPPORTS the following U.S. Chamber of Commerce national priorities:

HEALTH CARE

- ☆ **Tax Credits for Workplace Wellness and Disease Management** – Support stand-alone legislation that offers tax credits for employer-sponsored workplace wellness programs for employees.
- ☆ **Small Business Health Plans** – Support legislation that gives small businesses the option to purchase health benefits with the same tax advantages that large businesses have; pool together to leverage purchasing power; participate in benefits plans that are not burdened with costly state mandates; and permit the owners of small businesses to participate in their companies' benefits plan.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

- ☆ **Comprehensive Immigration Reform** – Continue pursuing comprehensive immigration reform to better secure our borders; improve verification systems for determining whether an employee is authorized to work in the United States; create a new temporary worker program so that employers can hire immigrant workers when U.S. workers are not available; and provide, under certain strict qualification criteria, a reasonable pathway to legal status for undocumented workers currently in the United States.
- ☆ **Visa Reform** – Advocate for the continuation and expansion of both temporary and permanent visa programs for highly skilled workers (including the L-1, H-1B, and EB) as well as programs that enable employers to access and keep the talents necessary to compete in the global market.

TRADE

- ☆ **Trade Agreements and Trade Preference Programs** – Advocate for congressional approval of pending free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Korea and work for the effective implementation of all current trade agreements at home and abroad.
- ☆ **Trade Promotional Authority** – Work to lay the foundation for renewal of the President's Trade Promotion Authority to permit negotiation of additional bilateral free trade agreements as well as multilateral agreements.

LABOR ISSUES

- ☆ Oppose initiatives to make union organizing easier, including union-backed proposals to abolish secret ballot elections in favor of card check majorities for union recognition.
- ☆ Oppose efforts to expand leave or to mandate paid sick leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

LEGAL REFORM

- ☆ **Small Business**
 - Urge passage of legislation to allow small businesses to be reimbursed for Attorneys' fees when successfully challenging the government's regulatory actions in court.
 - Work to pass the Small Business Liability Reform Act, which would provide caps on punitive damage awards and proportional liability for small business.
 - Work to pass a Small Business Administration reauthorization bill that would support strong and stable SBA 7(a) and 504 lending programs.

TAXES

- ☆ Promote efforts to extend or make permanent the Bush tax cuts.
- ☆ Repeal or substantially reform the alternative minimum tax (AMT).

★ State Issues ★

The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce SUPPORTS the following Florida Chamber of Commerce state priorities:

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT REFORM

- ☆ Return the initiative process to the citizens it was designed to serve and work to reduce the influence of special interests in our broken initiative process.

TAX AND TAX REGULATION

- ☆ **Property Tax Relief** - Halting extraordinary property tax increases and the continued shifting of the property tax burden onto Florida business owners.
- ☆ **Taxpayer Fairness** - Rebalancing property tax laws for valuing property and challenging unfair assessments on taxpayers.

INSURANCE

- ☆ **Commercial Property Insurance** - Stabilizing the commercial property insurance market and providing more affordable and available hurricane insurance to Florida's business owners.
- ☆ **Health Insurance Costs** - Expanding the options for business owners to purchase affordable health care through small group plans.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

- ☆ **Workforce Education** - Improving workforce and career education programs by targeting them to the workforce needs of Florida's employers.
- ☆ **Paycheck Protection** - Protecting the rights of Florida workers as established by the Beck decision and allowing employees to choose whether or not to fund union political activities with dues.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

- ☆ **Guns at Work** - Opposing government intrusion into the private property rights of Florida's employers.

LAWSUIT ABUSE REFORM

- ☆ **Fabre Repeal** - Opposing efforts to require defendants with financial resources to pay more than their fair share.

☆ County and Education Issues ☆

The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce SUPPORTS the following Palm Beach County and education priorities:

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

- ☆ **FAU/UM Regional Medical Program** - \$3.3 million in recurring state funding to continue implementation of the four-year regional medical campus of the University of Miami Miller School at Florida Atlantic University, a program that addresses the critical shortage of physicians in the State of Florida.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

- ☆ **Life Science Cluster** - Expanding the county's Life Science Cluster and allocating revenue into the State of Florida Innovation Fund for additional economic development opportunities.

☆ The City of Boca Raton ☆

The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce SUPPORTS the following city priorities:

SPINE

- ☆ Support the downtown pedestrian "spine" project which will become the link between Mizner Park and Royal Palm Place and act as a true pedestrian oriented environment centrally located within the core of the Central Business District of Boca Raton.

I-95 INTERCHANGE

- ☆ Funding of new I-95 Interchange and auxiliary lanes between Glades Road and Yamato Road to support FAU and regional growth.

WORKFORCE HOUSING

- ☆ Continue to support public policy initiatives that will provide incentives and resources to stimulate production of affordable workforce housing in the greater Boca Raton market.

TRANSPORTATION

- ☆ Funding for comprehensive transportation initiatives including shuttle service.

NORTH FEDERAL HIGHWAY

- ☆ Support the continued effort to redevelop the North Federal Highway corridor, creating a mixed use pedestrian oriented environment, which provides an additional commerce/lifestyle center in the northern most part of our community.



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