



## 2022 Legislative Agenda

The Aurora Regional Chamber is the voice of and the catalyst for business success. We serve as the region's frontline advocate for business at the local, state and federal levels and aim to accomplish collectively what cannot be done individually. Representing the combined clout of nearly 600 companies across diverse industry sectors throughout the four-county area, we provide leadership on business issues, support economic growth, and attract businesses and talent to ensure a strong and prosperous region.

2020 brought about unprecedented challenges that continue to linger in our economy and businesses. Our advocacy priorities reflect the timely issues that the business community in the greater Aurora region is facing and seek to help all businesses strive towards a stronger future.

### Key Advocacy Policy Priorities:

- Economic Recovery
- Tax & Regulatory Issues
- Employment Regulation
- Workforce Development & Education
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Equitable Economic Development

---

## Economic Recovery

Businesses continue to be impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and corresponding events. The Aurora Regional Chamber will proactively advocate for support and relief to businesses as they continue to employ community members, pay taxes and keep our local economy going.

The Chamber supports:

- Financial relief to employers struggling through the health and economic crises.
- Utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funding to help replenish the unemployment trust fund and alleviate the impending financial drain from Illinois businesses.
- Targeted relief to the most impacted businesses, including small businesses and the hospitality, tourism and childcare industries.



- Liability protections from egregious or frivolous COVID-19 claims against businesses including but not limited to providing legal protections to employers who follow the CDC established safety guidelines from claims that COVID-19 was contracted at their place of business.
- Deferral of scheduled minimum wage increases to allow for business recovery and/or extending and expanding the Minimum Wage Credit for an additional three years by carrying over each tier of credit for an extra calendar year.
- Responsible budgeting across all levels of government that results in adequate funding for local governments and businesses across the region.

## **Tax & Regulatory Issues**

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce supports a competitive and fair tax climate that promotes and fosters economic growth through private sector expansion.

The Chamber supports:

- A tax code that encourages and rewards entrepreneurship and investment that are essential to economic growth.
- Local government initiatives to prioritize doing business with local vendors and contractors.
- Free and fair trade in a global economy and policies that support small business access to global economies.
- Policies that drive local government consolidation and reduce property tax burdens on tax payers.
- Fiscal stability within State and local government including proposals that close the State's structural budget deficit and reduce the bill backlog either through reductions in spending or revenue increases that are broad-based and limited without harming economic growth.
- Reforms to government pensions and retiree health care programs for current employees, as well as future hires.

The Chamber opposes:

- Costly regulatory and labor mandates on businesses.
- Additional tax levies on the business community.
- Legislation that requires businesses to provide income and valuation information to county officials under the guise of property tax system accuracy and transparency.
- Tax and revenue increases that hinder economic growth and capital investment in our region, including legislation that would repeal or negatively modify important business tax benefits.
- Property tax legislation that would result in significant shifts in property tax burden from residents to businesses or significant shifts in property taxes on residents or businesses.



## Employment Regulations

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce supports employment policies that will help make Illinois and the region attractive for growth, investment and job creation by creating an environment where businesses can compete in a demanding global marketplace.

The Chamber supports:

- Policies that provide both employers and employees flexibility, consistency and simplicity in response to the many workplace challenges that the pandemic has shone a spotlight on.
- Reforms to minimize employer costs related to workers' compensation, unemployment insurance and tort systems.
- Biometric Privacy Information Act (BIPA) reform that would modernize the act to reflect advancements in the uses of biometric technology and protect businesses from financially devastating frivolous law suits.
- Legislation that will aid in further growth of the "gig" economy business model while providing reasonable protections for workers.

The Chamber opposes:

- Data privacy legislation that would harm economic prospects for businesses based on data collection and exposes businesses to frivolous litigation. The Chamber would however, support legislation that supports data collection policies that protect consumers without stifling economic activity.

## Workforce Development & Education

The recovery of our workforce will rely heavily on not only the recovery of businesses but on the ability of our region to help workers re-skill and upskill. Education and workforce development will remain a timely priority of the Chamber.

The Chamber supports:

- Education systems and other initiatives that produce and sustain a qualified workforce able to meet changing market needs and funding for these systems.
- Programs that promote equitable access to high quality, life-long career development for the region's present and future jobs.
- Enhancement of parent/guardian engagement, community involvement, and cultural diversity in students' learning and development.
- Opportunities to develop and retain workforce in the healthcare, IT and manufacturing, amongst other industries.
- Development of innovative programs that will assist in K-12 career awareness, make skills training more readily available, scale successful workforce programs across the state, improve access to in-demand training and make funding available to support such programs.
- Updates to immigration laws that would address both our current and future economic need for both high-skilled and low-skilled workers through the creation of work visa programs while protecting our national security interests.



## **Transportation & Infrastructure**

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce believes transportation and infrastructure are vital to the region's economic growth. Investing in transportation infrastructure will assist in stimulating the economy. As such, we support improvements to our region's transportation infrastructure.

The Chamber supports:

- Policies and projects that enhance efficiency and access to transportation opportunities.
- Projects that will enhance existing business corridors by providing beautification and increasing traffic efficiency to benefit the businesses in those corridors.
- Long-term infrastructure investment, including the passage of federal infrastructure investment legislation.
- Financial relief for public transportation agencies to keep the most vulnerable and essential portions of our workforce able to work.

## **Equitable Economic Development**

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce supports economic development initiatives that will make our region's businesses stronger, healthier, and more prosperous. The Chamber will support economic development policies that are aimed at encouraging business investment and improving business productivity.

The Chamber supports:

- Policies and initiatives that spur economic growth through business attraction and retention
- Protecting current economic development incentive programs that encourage investment and stimulate economic growth, especially programs that encourage investment in historically depressed areas.
- Extending the EDGE credit sunset clause out for another ten years and utilizing the tax credit as an incentive to attract new businesses to the State of Illinois as well as allowing for the growth and development of existing companies.
- Modernization of business tax incentives such as EDGE Tax Credit and the Research and Development Tax Credit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and enhance benefits for minority-owned businesses.
- Incentives that encourage investment in technology and innovation.
- Policies that advance an equitable, inclusive, and diverse economy including opportunities for minority and women owned businesses (MWBs) and disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs), so that all businesses have the opportunity to thrive.
- Attracting companies that provide living wage jobs and commit to higher local residents.
- Efforts to create programs and services that increase entrepreneurship.
- Policies that balance environmental and economic interests.
- Expansion of access to community-wide broadband, 5G and fiber connectivity.