



Public Affairs Committee  
Pro-Business Advocacy Policy Guide



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The following establishes a set of regulations by which the Public Affairs Committee (Committee) of the Defiance Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) shall identify issues of importance to the business community as well as develop and advance pro-business advocacy positions:

### **Committee Membership**

The Committee is a standing committee of the Chamber. The Committee shall be comprised of an odd number of members, consisting of not less than five and not more than 9. At least one member of the Committee shall also be an active member of the Chamber's Executive Committee. The Chairman of the Chamber shall appoint a Chair to the Committee from the Committees membership on an annual basis.

### **Committee Charge**

The Committee shall be charged with the primary responsibility to promote a positive, pro-active business environment in the Defiance Area by:

1. Developing and supporting legislation and other governmental action which promotes a strong business climate and job growth opportunities.
2. Opposing legislation and other governmental action which inhibits a strong business climate and diminishes job growth opportunities.
3. Establishing productive relationships between business interests and public officials.
4. Providing forums to inform public officials and candidates for public office on issues impacting the business community.
5. Communicating official Chamber positions to the appropriate public officials prior to their action on the issue.
6. Endeavoring to hold public officials accountable for their actions and the resulting impacts on the business community. This may be accomplished by the circulation of public official voting records to Chamber membership on any issue on which the Chamber has communicated an official position.

While the Committee of the Chamber shall be charged with the above-referenced responsibility to promote a positive, pro-active business environment, the Chamber is a non-partisan organization and shall neither endorse candidates for public office nor political parties.



## Issue and Proposal Identification

The Committee shall identify issues and proposals which impact the business community through:

1. Member input. The Committee shall establish a means by which Chamber members may submit issues for consideration by the Committee. Issues for consideration must be presented in writing utilizing the Request for Issue Advocacy Form (see Attachment).
2. Staff input. Staff members of the Chamber shall submit issues for consideration by the Committee.
3. The GROW Program. Participation in the Grassroots Ohio Works Program of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce shall facilitate the identification of issues for consideration by the Committee.

## Advocacy Position Development

Once an issue/proposal has been identified, the Committee shall develop positions of the Chamber through the following process:

1. Collection of information:
  - a. The Committee shall gather the facts from proponents, opponents, members, public officials, and other interested parties.
  - b. The Committee shall evaluate the potential impact of the issue/proposal on the business climate in the Defiance area.
    - i. Who will be impacted?
    - ii. To what degree?
  - c. Does the Chamber have the time and resources to successfully impact the outcome?
2. Measure the issue/proposal options against the Chamber mission statement.

Missions Statement: The Defiance Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to achieve the objectives of preserving the competitive enterprise system of business and promoting business and community growth and development.

In evaluating issues/proposals:

- a. The Committee shall encourage full participation by all Committee members to ensure a diversity of perspectives.
- b. The Committee shall develop positions based upon a Committee consensus basis.



- c. Absent direction from the Chamber Board of Directors (Board), the Committee shall have the authority to develop and advance positions based upon a vote of approval by the majority of the Committees membership.
  - d. At the request of the Board, the Committee shall not develop nor advance a position without Board approval.
  - e. The Committee, at its discretion, may seek input from the Board on the development of any position.
    - i. In exercising its discretion to seek Board input, the Committee shall consider: the scope of the issue/proposal; the degree of potential impact of the issue/proposal on the business community; the timeframe in which to act on the issue/proposal; and other factors the Committee finds material.
3. Establish formal public policy positions of the Chamber through the development of position statements. Formal Issue Position Options include:
- a. Interested Party
  - b. Non-Opposition
  - c. Partial Opposition
  - d. Opposition
  - e. Partial Support
  - f. Support

### Statements of Position

1. The Committee of the Chamber shall develop statements of position once an issue policy has been established. In general, such statements of position shall contain:
  - a. Synopsis- a brief explanation of the issue, proposed ordinance, bill rule, resolution, etc...
  - b. Proponents Objective - what is the purpose of the proposed action.
  - c. Stakeholders - who is impacted.
  - d. Position of Chamber - Does the Chamber: support; partially oppose; oppose; non oppose; partially support; or express its status as an interested party. In stating the position of the Chamber, the Committee shall state whether the position has been established through Committee consensus alone or in cooperation with the Chamber Board.
  - e. Rationale - State primary reasons for Chamber's position.
  - f. Recommendation - what is the method of advocacy to influence the desired outcome.



## Methods of Advocacy

The public policy positions of the Chamber shall be advanced by the following means:

1. Education of appropriate public officials as to Chamber's position.
2. Expression of Chamber's position to membership, and if deemed necessary a request for member contact with appropriate public officials.
3. Publication of Chamber's position.