

2019 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, the largest free-standing chamber in the state, urges lawmakers to pursue legislation that encourages Connecticut businesses to invest and grow opportunities for good, well-paying jobs. On behalf of its 2,175 members that employ over 50,000 residents, the Chamber respectfully offers the following outline of policy proposals and priorities to the members of the Connecticut General Assembly:

- Support a balanced and sustainable state budget that allows the state to unlock its full economic potential, addresses long-term pension obligations and maintains critical services without raising taxes, raiding designated funds, or shifting burdens to municipalities.
- Protect the financial viability of the Special Transportation Fund by ensuring adequate revenues to meet multi-modal transportation needs.
- Support policies that encourage and promote tourism which generates \$14.7 billion in total traveler and tourist spending, and \$1.7 billion in state and local tax revenue. Generating more than 82,000 direct jobs, tourism supports 5.3% of the state's workforce and is a vital economic driver in Middlesex County and throughout Connecticut.
- Actively engage the business community when considering measures dealing with paid family leave and any increase in the minimum wage. Provisions such as a training wage, a lower minimum wage for seasonal employees and training programs, and other creative options should be fully considered in order to not put additional economic pressures on employers.
- Eliminate unnecessary municipal requirements and oppose any additional mandates that result in higher property tax burdens for residents and businesses.
- Require that regulatory programs are effectively and efficiently administered to reduce unnecessary costs, burdens, or delays for Connecticut's businesses.
- Further pursue opportunities to strengthen the workforce talent pipeline to meet the needs of key sectors by working with school systems, the manufacturing community, and other key stakeholders.
- Support measures to safeguard and keep economically vibrant Connecticut's hospitals and health systems, which are vital economic engines that support 200,000 jobs and annually contribute more than \$27 billion to the economy.
- Ensure that state policies and plans properly balance the public interests including the needs for safe and adequate water supply, a diverse, balanced energy supply, economic development, public health and safety, recreation and the environment.
- Ensure that changes in sales tax or to existing tax credits do not overly impact Connecticut businesses. Maintain the Customers Dealer Trade-in allowance at time of purchase of a new vehicle.
- Foster additional partnerships between the state and private providers that often deliver services to state residents in a more cost effective manner.

Questions or concerns can be directed to jpuigliese@middlesexchamber.com.