



TENNESSEE CHAMBER of Commerce & Industry

TENNESSEE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

THE 2021 AGENDA: LEGISLATIVE & POLICY



WHAT'S INSIDE:

2021 AGENDA: BUSINESS BY THE NUMBERS • TN RECOVERY NOW

A NOTE FROM THE TENNESSEE CHAMBER:

2021



The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry is proud to announce our 2021 legislative and policy agenda. As Tennessee’s premier statewide business trade association, we work to engage major businesses and CEOs in legislative districts across our great state and partner with local chambers of commerce and economic development agencies. Our business members represent diverse industries and consist of small, medium and large employers as we also serve as our state’s manufacturing association. Our strong partnerships provide us with a significant grassroots engagement impacting policy and proposed legislation. Our 2021 agenda is generated from these businesses and their feedback on important issues. Business input focuses on policy issues needed to succeed and ensure Tennessee is one of our nation’s best states to start and grow a business.

For the 2021 legislative session, the Tennessee Chamber will primarily be focused on working toward our state’s full economic recovery. Our *Recovery Now TN* economic recovery agenda is directly targeted to enhance recovery and stability. Our efforts are primarily concentrated on the areas of business assistance and regulations, infrastructure, tax and economic development and workforce and education policy. The pandemic has taken a drastic toll on many businesses and Tennessee’s recovery is a priority embedded in our mission and initiatives. With 2020 behind us, we visualize 2021 as a tremendous opportunity for Tennessee to get back to business and focus on economic growth.

How was the agenda formulated? *The Chamber’s 2021 Agenda is developed with input from regional meetings hosted across the state with local businesses and chambers of commerce, input from the Chamber Board of Directors, and member surveys. Throughout the process, state business leaders shared their concerns and ideas and we are proud that the 2021 Legislative Agenda is reflective of those views. Throughout our legislative agenda, we reiterate the Tennessee Chamber’s core principles of promoting free enterprise, removing obstacles that impede job creation, and providing economic prosperity for all.*

Respectfully,

Bradley Jackson
President & CEO

Ryan King
Vice President
of Government Affairs

Mallorie Kerby
Associate Vice President of
Environment and Energy

Lauren Cecil
Manager, Government Affairs

HOW OUR SCORECARD WORKS

During legislative session, the Tennessee Chamber takes key votes into consideration. These votes make up the Chamber’s annual Legislative Scorecard. Votes may be on a range of issues important to the Chamber’s mission, policy agenda and the overall wellbeing of the Tennessee business community.

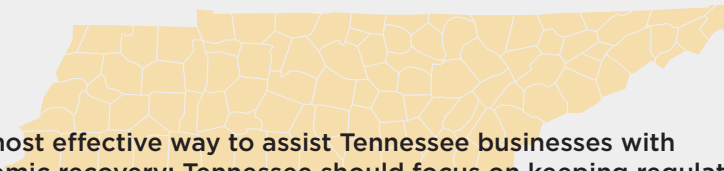
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BUSINESS BY THE NUMBERS

#1

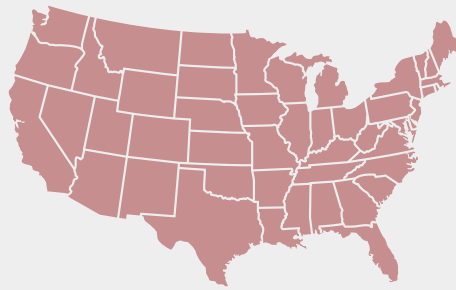
The most effective way to assist Tennessee businesses with economic recovery: Tennessee should focus on keeping regulatory burden low and allow businesses to move forward with low interference. (Source: 2021 Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry Policy Survey)



16

The number of states that have passed COVID liability protections.

(Footnote: Tennessee's Covid-19 Liability Protection Act is widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive and robust in the nation.)



86%

of Tennessee Chamber members surveyed believe children need to be safely back in school and fear they are falling behind.

(Source: 2021 Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry Policy Survey)

800K

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN TENNESSEE



\$9 BILLION

IN PPP ASSISTANCE RECEIVED IN TENNESSEE

51%



of leaders from different industry sectors say they are doing slightly or much worse than pre-pandemic.

(Source: US Chamber of Commerce)



BUSINESS BY THE NUMBERS



36%

The American Bankruptcy Institute estimates 36% increase in 2020 over the previous year.

\$1,000,000

in unemployment support averages **300% tax savings for Tennessee employers.** (These efforts have been made possible by Governor Lee and the Legislative Stimulus Recovery Group.)

70%



of Tennessee Chamber members surveyed say access to childcare been a significant issue for employees. (Source: 2021 Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry Policy Survey)



3%

Total percentage Tennessee's unemployment rate grew in 2020 (1/2020- 3.4%, 12/2020- 6.4%) (Source: Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development)

58%

of small businesses report they are concerned about permanently closing. (Source: US Chamber of Commerce)

44%

The US Small Business administration estimates businesses with less than 500 employees account for 44% of US economic impacts.



OUR 2021 AGENDA:



RECOVERY NOW TN - ECONOMIC RECOVERY AGENDA

COVID LIABILITY PROTECTION:



Tennessee's leaders, including Governor Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly, enacted liability protections noted as some of the best in the nation. These protections have contributed to our economic growth and stability and were a major priority of the Tennessee Chamber in the 2020 special session. In the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked to convene over 30 groups to support these protections. We will monitor any proposed changes and support the continuation of this Act to protect and ensure economic growth.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PANDEMIC RESPONSE:



The pandemic has drastically impacted business operations in our state and in response, strategic and targeted policy adjustments must be considered that balance public health with economic growth. To ensure Tennessee's continued economic growth, the Tennessee Chamber supports proposals that lower overall business tax burdens and efforts that ensure the Tennessee Department of Revenue resolves tax disputes fairly and protects taxpayer confidentiality. Additionally, we will vigorously defend existing business tax exemptions and advocate for economic development policy that allows incentives in order to keep our state competitive with surrounding states.

PANDEMIC SUPPORT: WORKERS' COMPENSATION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT LAW POLICY:



In response to the recent pandemic, Tennessee's Worker's Compensation and Unemployment systems must work to ensure the integrity of those systems for employers. It is critical that our workers' compensation system operate fairly. Accordingly, we oppose injury presumptions during this pandemic. In addition, we support efforts to address the circumstances of employee misclassification as it relates to workers' compensation. With respect to Tennessee's unemployment system, we support the efforts of both Governor Lee and our Legislature to provide stimulus assistance that both financially stabilizes our fund solvency and prevents increased taxes on all employers. We will promote human resources, employment and labor law policies that balance employee rights and regulatory burdens on employers.

BUSINESS CLOSURES, RELIEF / STATE BUDGET:



The Tennessee Chamber believes business shutdowns should be minimized or eliminated. We will work with the General Assembly as they debate which authorities should have the ability to place pandemic or other restrictions on businesses and the general public. We will closely monitor budget proposals that could adversely affect businesses by altering how they are regulated, taxed, incentivized, etc. We will continue to advocate for targeted use of relief funding to Tennessee businesses most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

PERMANENTLY ESTABLISH TENNESSEE AS RIGHT TO WORK STATE:



The Tennessee Chamber believes Right-to-Work (RTW) is a crucial element to Tennessee's strong business climate. We will work to constitutionally embed RTW in the Tennessee Constitution in order to keep the Volunteer State a premier destination for businesses. We believe this is a crucial initiative that sends the powerful message that Tennessee is serious about its business climate.

BUILDING MATERIALS MADE IN TENNESSEE:



The Tennessee Chamber recognizes that the manufacturing of building materials is critical to our economic growth as well as affordable housing. We have established a coalition that will ensure all building materials and energy resources are treated equally for residential and commercial construction projects as they meet certain safety and permit requirements established by the Tennessee General Assembly. The chamber and the business community have noted the importance of affordable housing to our economic growth.



OUR 2021 AGENDA:



RECOVERY NOW TN - ECONOMIC RECOVERY AGENDA (continued)

MANUFACTURING INITIATIVES- MANUFACTURING DAY RECOGNITION AND SMART FACTORY INSTITUTE:



Tennessee is recognized as a top state for manufacturing which produces significant economic activity. To promote and enhance our manufacturing climate, we will support initiatives such as state funding for the Smart Factory Institute which would establish a U.S. institute in Tennessee. This will provide manufacturers with technology and innovation, collaborative relationships and certifications to improve manufacturing processes through access to the latest technology in advanced manufacturing. In addition, we will support efforts to officially designate the first Friday in October as Manufacturing Day to promote careers and awareness about Tennessee Manufacturing.

ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR TENNESSEE'S PROSPERITY

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WORKPLACE SAFETY:



The Tennessee Chamber and our members consistently demonstrate that environmental compliance and stewardship and workplace safety are top priorities. We will work to ensure a fair and balanced approach to any new and existing laws, regulations and policies to balance economic growth and protect natural resources.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT:



The Chamber supports the enhancement of our overall infrastructure systems to improve rural and urban development in order to help economic growth and development in all areas of Tennessee. Historic revitalization tax credit and enhanced access to broadband are crucial for business and Tennessee's economic growth.

ENHANCING TENNESSEE'S WORKFORCE THROUGH EDUCATION POLICY

K-12 EDUCATION POLICY:



Our education system, now more than ever, is vitally important to our business climate, economic growth and recovery from the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic on our education system directly impacts Tennessee businesses and learning loss is a major concern of the Tennessee business community. We will also support efforts to incentivize and provide resources for in-person teaching as well as accountability to support educational standards. We support increased exposure to technical career options that will improve students' employability skills. Any suspension of accountability standards should be temporary. The Chamber recognizes the importance of quality childcare and pre-kindergarten programs that are accessible and affordable.

TENNESSEE CAREER AWARENESS AND PREPARATION SYSTEM (CAPS):



We support continued funding for the implementation of increasing students' knowledge about career opportunities and paths to a variety of exciting careers. The CAPS system engages K-12 students to connect them with in-demand career knowledge.



OUR MISSION

The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry is the unified voice of business and premier advocacy organization in the state. The Tennessee Chamber creates prosperity for all Tennesseans through an economy of increased productivity and global competitiveness.

tnchamber.org



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