

2017 Legislative Priorities



*Franklin-Southampton Area
Chamber of Commerce*

The Franklin-Southampton Area Chamber of Commerce is strongly committed to regional cooperation and economic development. We work on behalf of our 240 members and their employees to create the best possible business climate for our community. The following legislative priorities represent our key business concerns for the Virginia General Assembly's consideration:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **SUPPORT** the Virginia Small Business Development Center Network, which continues to provide vital support to our area businesses.
- **SUPPORT** initiatives to increase the Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund for incentives to new & existing businesses.
- **SUPPORT** the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.
- **SUPPORT** minimizing burdensome regulations and promote efficient regulatory oversight.
- **SUPPORT** additional programs to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses and provide incentives to encourage growth & expansion of our existing manufacturing industry.
- **SUPPORT** programs that support tourism product development and infrastructure.
- **SUPPORT** broadband service expansion to strengthen area businesses.
- **SUPPORT** expanded opportunities in agriculture and forestry.
- **SUPPORT** the Virginia Main Street Program

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **SUPPORT** the innovative workforce credentials initiative "Workforce Credentials: The Pathway to Virginia's New Middle Class" presented by Virginia Community College Chancellor.
- **SUPPORT** initiatives to provide quality education and training resulting in a more skilled, productive workforce.
- **SUPPORT** continued funding of the Paul D. Camp Community College Regional Workforce Center to provide needed training for new and different vocational jobs.
- **SUPPORT** Isle of Wight County and Franklin-Southampton economic development teams in order to maximize their ability to bring jobs & industry to the region.
- **SUPPORT** regional cooperation to ensure future success and growth and we call on local, state, and federal services to support us in every effort to create jobs and industry.

HEALTHCARE

- **SUPPORT** legislation and programs that assist businesses, particularly small businesses, facilitate the health care needs of their employees. Small businesses must have affordable healthcare options.
- **SUPPORT** greater control of healthcare costs and the investigation of new strategies to provide affordable healthcare to all citizens of the Commonwealth.
- **SUPPORT** adequate funding for core aging services such as in home care and specialized transportation.
- **SUPPORT** caps on medical malpractice liability awards.
- **SUPPORT** Virginia's COPN program as an important component of the Commonwealth's health care policy & encourage the retention of COPN in its current form.

EDUCATION

- **SUPPORT** full state funding of program mandates as prescribed by the Commonwealth to be implemented in the public school system. Adequate funding for existing education responsibilities must be a priority.
- **SUPPORT** education reform efforts that improve graduation rates & academic achievement.
- **SUPPORT** STEM education & strengthen vocational training opportunities.
- **SUPPORT** career readiness including industry certification and licensure for high demand, high-skilled jobs.
- **SUPPORT** funding for Early Childhood Education to support the developmental needs of young children.
- **SUPPORT** revised SOL standards that will allow teachers more class room time for teaching fundamentals.
- **SUPPORT** the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act to secure additional resources for Career & Technical Education.

ENVIRONMENT

- **SUPPORT** and encourage collaboration between Virginia and US Government representatives to obtain resources that will implement a plan of action to alleviate flooding caused by the Chowan River basin.
- **SUPPORT** a balance between appropriate government oversight and permitting with economic expansion and commerce.

TAXATION

- **SUPPORT** a comprehensive tax reform that encourages economic growth and creates a pro-business climate that would ease the burden of taxation on small business.
- **SUPPORT** adopting a simple uniform taxing system to modernize Virginia's tax structure.
- **SUPPORT** equal authority among all counties to levy and collect a tobacco tax.
- **SUPPORT** increased efficiency in State Departments to better respond to the business community in a timely manner with adequate problem resolution.
- **OPPOSE** any measure that taxes businesses at a different level than residential property owners.

TRANSPORTATION

- **SUPPORT** long-term solutions to meet critical transportation infrastructure needs throughout the Commonwealth.
- **SUPPORT** adequate funding for rural public transportation.
- **OPPOSE** fees designated to fund transportation that disproportionately targets the business community.