

2011 Business Legislative Agenda

The South Palm Beach County Chamber Partnership
Taking Your Local Issues All the Way to the Top!



☆ South Palm Beach County Chamber Partnership's Business Agenda 2011 ☆

One of the objectives of the South Palm Beach County Chamber Partnership - the Greater Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Boynton Beach Chambers of Commerce - is to advocate for our members as it relates to Federal, State and local government agendas. Many of the laws that are presented have a major impact on the business community. Your Chambers have taken a stand on your behalf by urging elected officials to support and defend your interests and the interests of the entire business community.

Federal Issues

HEALTH CARE

- Support legislation that works to lessen the burden of the new government health care law while promoting strategies and solutions to help businesses get costs under control, improve quality, and increase coverage of the uninsured.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- Support work around the world to champion IP as vital to creating jobs, saving lives, advancing global economic growth, and generating breakthrough solutions to global challenges.

CAPITAL MARKETS

- Support the work toward advancing America's global leadership in capital formation by supporting capital markets that are the most fair, efficient, and innovative in the world.

ENERGY

- Support a national effort to encourage pro-growth energy action that increases diverse energy supplies, improves efficiency, and promotes environmental stewardship while putting Americans back to work.

LEGAL REFORM

- Support legislation to end lawsuit abuse and to ensure that businesses receive the fair, efficient, and consistent justice system they deserve.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Support the elimination of export barriers and level the playing field for American products that will stimulate the economy and lead to job creation.

TAXES

- Oppose tax increases that reduce businesses' ability to grow, invest, and create jobs.

LABOR RELATIONS

- Support fair workplace rules that protect workers and promote employer flexibility and economic growth, while opposing harmful proposals and burdensome regulations that will generate litigation instead of jobs.

WORKFORCE

- Support work to strengthen the nation's educational standards, promote effective workforce training programs, and advocate for common sense immigration reform.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support the charge to modernize and expand our nation's transportation, telecommunications, energy, and water networks.

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Every year, local and state Chambers of Commerce guide businesses through legislative issues that will directly impact Florida's economy. The South Palm Beach County Chamber Partnership is in a constant state of collaboration, working to enhance our economy through job creation, recovery and transition to the future. The focus remains on six key pillars that were developed as a result of extensive research conducted by the Florida Chamber Foundation.

State Issues

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WITH THE FLORIDA CHAMBER FOUNDATION'S SIX PILLARS PLAN

When the Florida Chamber Foundation and more than 40 partners began collaborating on the state's first-ever strategic plan, they benchmarked best practices from some of America's leading corporations and used the state's official population and job estimates. Everything we know about Florida has changed, and a new framework, known as the Six Pillars of Florida's Future Economy, emerged to serve as a blueprint for moving Florida forward – beginning with the end goal in mind.

When we look forward to 2030, we discover there is a void in long-term planning for Florida's future. The Six Pillars plan serves as the basis for a business community led effort to execute one plan, anchored to the future. As we transition to a new government and new economy, there is a three-part vision that will serve as a decision matrix for new ideas or to evaluate changing the old way of doing business. They are:

Prosperity & High Paying Jobs – Increasing Florida's personal per capita income above the national average and further diversifying the economy.

Vibrant & Sustainable Communities – Continuing to make Florida the number one state to live, work and do business. The next generation of talent will live where they perceive the best quality of life to be. That can and should be Florida.

Global Competition & Leadership – Florida not only competes regionally against other states but, increasingly, we are competing globally on everything from medical services to advanced manufacturing to engineering and simulation. Florida's leaders need to make decisions with an eye toward global relevance rather than merely regional competition.

PILLAR I: TALENT SUPPLY & EDUCATION

The South County Chamber Partnership views a quality education as a vehicle for ensuring Florida's transition to the new economy and will lead efforts to enhance educational governance, focus on better outcomes and improve opportunities for lifelong learning.

PRE-K

We Support:

- Securing necessary funding to support Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) learning opportunities.
- Expanding the use of technology in the classroom.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY

We Support:

- Paying teachers based on market principles and performance.

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State Issues ☆

- Replacing lifetime tenure with three-year contracts and increase teacher evaluations.
- Encouraging the Florida Department of Education to adopt the highest academic standards in the country.
- Making it easier to remove non-performing teachers from the classroom instead of transferring them from school to school.

HIGHER EDUCATION

We Support:

- Ensuring university performance that drives university funding.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We Support:

- Collaborating with Workforce Florida, Inc. and other partners to continue strengthening and improving Florida's talent supply chain.
- Expanding opportunities for career-minded high school students to earn industry certified and career readiness credentials.

PILLAR II: INNOVATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The South County Chamber Partnership strongly supports economic development through innovation by focusing on global trade, investing in research centers, bringing additional venture capital dollars to the state, and positioning Florida as a leader in industries such as aerospace, biotechnology, digital media, and health care and communications technology.

TARGETED INDUSTRIES

We Support:

- Continuing the development and enhancement of medical technologies to improve the overall value of health care services for Floridians.
- Addressing the need for early-stage funding for companies working to advance technologies in the bioscience industry.
- Adding global trade and logistics to the state's economic development organization's Targeted Industry List.

GLOBAL TRADE

We Support:

- Increasing the state's economic development organization's international budget to \$10 million, positioning Florida to benefit from pending increases in global trade.
- Expedited permitting for any inland multimodal facility moving cargo to or from Florida ports.

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

We Support:

- The creation of a research and development tax credit to encourage greater investments in the industry.
- Promoting investments in research centers and state universities to help build their capacity to support military research and development, which also offers the benefit of commercial application and transferability.
- Opportunities to advance innovative discoveries in avionics and aeronautics, unmanned vehicles, robotics, intelligence systems, nanotechnologies, computer engineering and electronics, human performance enhancements and special operations support.

INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

We Support:

- Legislation designed to foster Florida's entrepreneurial talent by bringing more investment capital dollars to Florida for investment in innovative enterprises and research, especially in high-technology sectors.

PILLAR III: INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH LEADERSHIP

The South County Chamber Partnership supports the enhancement of Florida's infrastructure and the effective management of growth.

ENERGY

We Support:

- Streamlining the permit and appeals process for energy projects to speed up construction time.
- Facilitating capital investment in new energy projects of all types, including fossil and non-fossil energy facilities.
- Full funding and implementation of all existing energy technology laws, as well as all incentives and loan guarantees that encourage the development of new energy technologies.
- Establishing an expedited review process for renewable energy projects.

TRANSPORTATION

We Support:

- Opposing any raid on the State Transportation Trust Fund.
- Eliminating regulatory roadblocks and incentivizing governments to turn to the private sector to speed up "shovel-ready" projects.
- Encouraging project financing and delivery approaches that attract private investment and payment-based public-private partnership (P3) ventures.

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GROWTH LEADERSHIP

We Support:

- Focusing on existing business expansion as a source of job growth while enhancing incentives for small- and medium-sized business development.
- Removing any restrictions or proposed regulations that would hamper the economic viability of agricultural and other rural land uses.
- Promoting diversification and increasing production plans for sustainable agriculture by pursuing new product markets and new export markets.

PILLAR IV: BUSINESS CLIMATE & COMPETITIVENESS

The South County Chamber Partnership supports the critical areas of predictability and efficiency to businesses and the state's regulatory agencies work to provide streamlined, consistent permitting processes for economic projects.

TAXATION

We Support:

- The phase-out of the corporate income tax, and finding ways to ensure the Tax Credit Scholarship Program is held harmless.
- Fighting to ensure Florida retailers have a level playing field by requiring online only retailers to collect or remit state sales tax (a.k.a. Streamlined Sales Tax/Remote Sales Tax Collection).

INSURANCE

We Support:

- Allowing an insurer to pay the actual cash value to an insured and hold back the replacement cash value until there is a written contract for repairs.
- Establishing rules and operating guidelines for public adjusters and clarify the definitions of a "sinkhole," "structural damage," "professional engineer," and "professional geologist."

LEGAL REFORM

We Support:

- Premises liability reform, summary judgment reform, crashworthiness reform, limitations on vicarious liability, product liability reform and medical malpractice reform.

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

We Support:

- Florida's strong resolution to demonstrate opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Paycheck Protection legislation that allows workers to opt-out of having their dues used for political purposes against their best interests.

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SMALL BUSINESS

We Support:

- Leveraging the \$30 billion fund created by the enactment of the “Small Business Jobs Act.”
- Micro-lending programs and small business loan programs.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

We Support:

- Strengthening the laws regarding misconduct and the award of benefits and also require drug testing of benefit recipients.
- Encouraging additional training and certification through the Florida Ready to Work program.

PILLAR V: CIVIC & GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

The South County Chamber Partnership believes that developing strong leaders among elected officials and from private and civic sectors is essential to achieving a prosperous future economy.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT REFORM

We Support:

- Regulating paid signature gatherers to prevent petition fraud.

PENSION PLAN REFORM

We Support:

- Aligning state employee pension contributions with other states and the private sector.
- Considering other cost-saving changes, such as switching new state employees from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

We Support:

- Regulatory freeze and a comprehensive review of all existing and imposed business regulations.
- Eliminating duplicative, outdated, obsolete rules, permitting processes and statutes.
- Instituting operational efficiencies by way of modernizing agency organization.

PILLAR VI: QUALITY OF LIFE & QUALITY PLACES

The South County Chamber Partnership supports the preserving of our quality of life and creating sustainable communities through grassroots efforts.

HEALTH CARE

We Support:

- Encouraging a patient-centered medical home model to ensure access to primary care physicians, early diagnosis of health conditions and provide preventative treatment.

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- Implementing policies within state agencies to keep regulation of health care issues within the state's purview.
- Implementing aggressive policies to address fraud and abuse in Medicaid, such as heightened sanctions for fraudulent providers and strengthened pre-payment reviews.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

We Support:

- Working toward developing a comprehensive state policy for promoting sustainable growth and development in rural areas by balancing the demands of conservation, agriculture, and economic development.
- Promoting more efficient use of energy through consumer education and advanced technologies, as well as modernize our energy infrastructure to ensure it is ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

☆ County and Education Issues ☆

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY (BDB)

- Encourage the Board of County Commissioners to increase the BDB's economic development budget to provide greater outreach to prospective relocating companies.
- Support the Governor's Recommendation to increase the Quick Action Closing Fund used to attract and expand jobs to the State of Florida.
- Establish the Florida Infrastructure Fund Partnership within the Florida Opportunity Fund to be built using future contingent tax credits and only deploy as a guarantee against the principal investment of private investors. Creation of this fund would generate approximately \$8 billion of new infrastructure in the State and produce an estimated 80,000 jobs.
- Create a state research and development tax credit to encourage greater R&D investments in Florida and deepens the state's roots in the innovation economy.
- Support the Florida Innovation Seed Fund being requested for seed-stage companies and technologies.
- Support the Quick Response Training fund which will be used to train new and existing employees.
- Create a new enterprise zone initiative for Florida that fosters economic investment and job creation in targeted urban and rural areas and is available to all counties.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY (FAU)

- Preserve operating funds, to the greatest extent possible, to the State University System (SUS).

 **The City of Boca Raton** 

ANNEXATION

- Support annexation of areas that provide opportunity to enhance Boca Raton and increase revenue potential specifically to support economic development and job creation.

REGULATORY EFFICIENCY

- Encourage the City of Boca Raton to continue to improve and streamline the permitting process to facilitate economic development and create jobs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Identify and create a dedicated funding source for economic development and the recruitment, retention and expansion of businesses.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

- Support the creation of a local preference policy for City of Boca Raton contracts.

LOCAL TAXES, FEES AND MILLAGE RATE

- Oppose any increases of local taxes, fees or millage rate; with the exception of creating a dedicated funding source for economic development incentives.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH PARK (LIRP)

- Support research for non-performing assets that could have greater potential if zoning was altered.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)

- Support the establishment of an Independent CRA Director to enhance the CRA district and create a sense of place in downtown Boca Raton.

GREEN ENERGY

- Support green energy initiatives, with emphasis on products produced in the United States.

 **The City of Boynton Beach &**

Unincorporated West Boynton Beach 

REGULATORY EFFICIENCY

- Encourage the City of Boynton Beach to continue to improve and streamline the permitting process to facilitate economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Identify and create a dedicated funding source for economic development.

☆ **The City of Boynton Beach &**

Unincorporated West Boynton Beach (cont.) ☆

LOCAL TAXES, FEES AND MILLAGE RATE

- Oppose any increases of local taxes, fees or millage rate; with the exception of creating a dedicated funding source for economic development.

MEDICAL ENTERPRISE ZONE SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support research for City of Boynton Beach and CRA Area non-performing assets that could have greater potential if zoning was altered.

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)

- Continue to support the establishment of a fully Independent CRA Board to recruit, retain and expand businesses and facilitate their establishment in the CRA district.

GREEN ENERGY

- In favor of supporting green energy initiatives, with emphasis on supporting the new Galaxy Elementary School Reconstruction and LEEDS Achievement as a Gateway to the Downtown Redevelopment of Boynton Beach Blvd.

MEDICAL ZONE OVER-LAY IN WEST BOYNTON BEACH

- Support the proposed West Boynton Beach Medical Zoning Overlay along the south side of Boynton Beach Blvd., west to State Road 7.

☆ **The City of Delray Beach** ☆

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Improve the business climate of Delray Beach through initiatives to promote the entire city as a regional draw for larger employers with a concentration on the Congress Avenue Corridor
- Promote Delray Beach internationally and domestically as a city to work, live and play

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Support legislation that will enhance prescription drug monitoring and increase the ability of law enforcement to address prescription drug abuse
- Support funding to support beach restoration projects for the 2.65 miles of the beach in Delray Beach



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Contacting your representatives about your Chamber's positions and your own concerns will enhance the Chamber's lobbying efforts at all levels of government.

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