

2015 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 260 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 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 Governor'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.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **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.

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.

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.

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** 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.

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