



**TAMPA BAY  
CHAMBER**

**2021 LEGISLATIVE  
AGENDA**



**VISION** <sup>20</sup>/<sub>26</sub>

# BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Guiding Principle

Economic development and business thrive where regional collaboration is strong, regulatory and tax burdens are minimal, right to work laws that protect our citizens remain in place, and wages are market rate. Businesses locate and expand in areas where these factors exist.

### Key

<b>F</b>	Federal
<b>S</b>	State
<b>\$</b>	State Funding Priority
<b>L</b>	Local

The Chamber Supports	Region
Coming together to address climate change with policies that are practical, flexible, predictable, and durable.	<b>F</b>
Encouraging Congress and the administration to preserve and expand the Visa Waiver Program and address delays, backlogs, and disruptions in our immigration and border management systems that impede the movement of legitimate businesses and tourists traveling across U.S. borders.	<b>F</b>
Legislation that would limit the liability of businesses from COVID-19 lawsuits.	<b>F   S</b>
Legislation that strengthens Florida's local governments and economic development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Augment the hiring of students to work on those projects.</li> <li>» Adequate support for Enterprise Florida.</li> <li>» The flexibility that Florida's Home Rule powers give municipalities.</li> </ul>	<b>S</b>
Phased initiatives to reduce the tax burden on commercial real estate leases.	<b>S</b>
Policies that support keeping the Tampa Bay Rays in Tampa Bay.	<b>S   L</b>
Recognizing community quality of life as an economic development driver.	<b>S   L</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
Revenue generation opportunities to offset tax losses due to COVID-19.	<b>S</b>
The State exercising its discretion to incentivize the resurgence of the cruise industry.	<b>S</b>
Increasing funding for tourism via Visit Florida and related agencies.	<b>\$</b>
Innovation Grants for company relocation or expansion to be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Office space on a college/university campus.</li> <li>» Research with professors applicable to business.</li> </ul>	<b>\$</b>
Matching dollars for Port Tampa Bay projects.	<b>\$</b>
Restoring arts & culture matching grants recommended by the Florida Department of Cultural Affairs.	<b>\$</b>
Engaging and empowering minority businesses	<b>L</b>
Engaging, training, and retaining young professionals	<b>L</b>
Policies that support the recruitment and retainment of high-wage jobs	<b>L</b>



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

## Guiding Principle

Equity and inclusion drives business competitiveness, job creation, increases diverse employee populations, and promotes inclusive economic growth. The Tampa Bay Chamber is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion. The core value of being a diverse and inclusive community is critical to the region's success.

### Key

<b>F</b>	Federal
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The Chamber Supports	Region
Advocating for policy that advances diversity, equity, and inclusion in business and lead efforts to remove barriers standing between people and opportunity.	<b>F</b>
Assisting companies with the development of workforce diversity initiatives.	<b>F</b>
Convening diverse chambers and other minority business organizations to discuss policy issues and speak with a collective voice.	<b>F</b>
Ensuring equal opportunity to career paths that lead to jobs, and workforce initiatives that create a more equitable talent marketplace and strengthen the American economy.	<b>F</b>
Promoting diversity across all levels of business, supporting minority-owned enterprises and entrepreneurs, and making the business case for closing the racial equity gap.	<b>F</b>
Community Partnership Schools, which are a priority in some of our most vulnerable communities.	<b>S</b>
Creating pathways for non-violent ex-offenders to reenter the workforce and become productive, self-sufficient citizens.	<b>S</b>
Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation trade exams being offered in Spanish.	<b>S</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
Streamlining the process of becoming a certified minority-owned enterprise.	<b>S   L</b>
Regional workforce development initiatives that build diverse talent and are inclusive of groups of people that have been traditionally disenfranchised such as minority populations.	<b>S</b>
Remediation and improvement of access to Unemployment Insurance benefits.	<b>S</b>
Policies that enhance job flexibility for parents with open cases in the child welfare system of care.	<b>S</b>
The facilitation of minority business growth and development.	<b>S</b>
Funding for corporate, non-profit, and quasi government board preparedness and training for diverse candidates.	<b>\$</b>
Bridging the digital divide.	<b>L</b>
Partnership development between law enforcement and minority communities.	<b>L</b>
Returning unused CRA dollars to the general fund, to focus on issues of equity.	<b>L</b>



# HEALTH CARE

## Guiding Principle

The Tampa Bay Chamber supports reducing the cost of health insurance to the business community by increasing access to quality health care for all Floridians, and legislation that gives our health care providers the infrastructure and regulatory environment needed to best serve our community.

### Key

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The Chamber Supports	Region
Better coordination of behavioral health funding between the Federal government and Florida.	<b>F</b>
Limiting the consequences of Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule MFAR that could potentially upend indigent care.	<b>F</b>
Policies to enhance access to critical health care services via telehealth, including behavioral health services.	<b>F   S</b>
The 340B outpatient drug pricing program.	<b>F</b>
A pathway to reimbursement for hospitals caring for post-acute care patients awaiting safe discharge.	<b>S</b>
Mitigating the growing health disparities due to the current pandemic.	<b>S</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
The Florida Hospital Association's policy to repeal the administrative burden required of non-profit hospitals in Florida regarding property tax exemptions.	<b>S</b>
The Florida Hospital Association's opposition to the creation of Advanced Birth Centers in Florida.	<b>S</b>
Transparency in health care costs.	<b>S</b>
Increased behavioral health funding.	<b>\$</b>
Medicaid funding and expansion of eligibility criteria to address the State's growing health insurance gap that coincides with the increase in unemployment.	<b>\$</b>



# MILITARY AND DEFENSE

## Guiding Principle

The Tampa Bay Chamber enjoys a close working relationship with MacDill Air Force Base - a vital part of our nation's defense that has a \$3 billion impact on the Tampa Bay community. We understand the importance of supporting our brave men and women and their families who serve our country and call our community home. As a Great American Defense Community, we will continue to support policies and investments that strengthen the defense community in Tampa Bay.

### Key

<b>F</b>	Federal
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The Chamber Supports	Region
Adequate transportation options for Military families in Hillsborough County, including: » A MacDill Ferry Connection. » Optimization of circulator routes for high density military populations in East/South Hillsborough County.	<b>F   S   L</b>
Amending the IRS Code by expanding the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to include military spouses as part of its benefited groups.	<b>F</b>
The Department of Defense Community Infrastructure Grant Pilot program.	<b>F</b>
Creating a business climate to attract the U.S. Space Force and secondary/auxiliary industries.	<b>S   L</b>
Opportunities that support veteran and military spouses seeking gainful employment and pathways to entrepreneurship.	<b>S   L</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
The need for federal budget certainty and predictability to help our defense community plan, implement, and enhance its support of MacDill Air Force Base.	<b>S</b>
Legislation that creates a uniform framework for recognizing servicemember academic credits and waives transfer of transcript fees for servicemembers and their dependents.	<b>S</b>
Tracking unemployment claims/job seeker benefits paid to military spouses.	<b>L</b>
Coordination between Hillsborough County Public Schools and Military Families to ensure a seamless education transition for Military Families.	<b>L</b>
The Military Commission's project to attract and grow the defense contractor community in partnership with the Tampa Bay EDC and other defense and business organizations.	<b>L</b>



# TRANSPORTATION

## Guiding Principle

Transportation is a core service of government that is critical for economic development and facilitating the efficient movement of goods, people, and services. Sufficient transportation funding of all options is needed to implement a robust and connected transportation network in Tampa Bay. We will work diligently to inform our elected officials that investments in regionally focused transit agencies are an opportunity for the expansion of resources, not replacing them at the county transit agency level.

### Key

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The Chamber Supports	Region
Advocating for transit projects as a region.	<b>F</b>
Efforts to continue to grow and enhance Tampa International Airport and Port Tampa Bay.	<b>F</b>
FDOT exemptions related to roadway shoulder use for express bus service.	<b>S</b>
Multi-modal transit options and stations to support those options.	<b>S   L</b>
Preserving sufficient Right of Way along I-4 between Tampa and Orlando for high speed rail.	<b>S</b>
Protecting the State Transportation Trust Fund.	<b>S</b>
School route safety enhancements.	<b>S</b>
State regulation of peer-to-peer operators including language requiring operators to enter into an agreement with airports.	<b>S</b>
The autonomy of local jurisdictions to provide adequate transit options for its citizens.	<b>S</b>
The continued study of the Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Significance (M-CORES) Infrastructure Program.	<b>S</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
Ensure investments are made in our transportation infrastructure (airport, highways, port) for recovery of the lost gas tax and other transportation revenues.	<b>\$</b>
State funding for transit.	<b>\$</b>
Bus Rapid Transit as the catalyst project per the Regional Transit Feasibility Plan.	<b>L</b>
Commuter Ferry Service.	<b>L</b>
New and innovative transportation and mobility options.	<b>L</b>
Policies that encourage innovative transit alternatives.	<b>L</b>
Programs and processes that ensure safety; encourage walkability, and that reduce traffic and pedestrian fatalities.	<b>L</b>
Promoting a dedicated funding source for transit.	<b>L</b>
The City of Tampa's Streetcar expansion.	<b>L</b>
The private sector partnering with local transit agencies.	<b>L</b>



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

## Guiding Principle

The business community must partner with stakeholders and policymakers to advocate for adequate resources to help recruit, develop and retain talent in Tampa Bay. Plans must be in place today to train and reemploy the workforce of tomorrow. The Chamber looks forward to supporting policy that strengthens workforce development and education.

### Key

<b>F</b>	Federal
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<b>L</b>	Local

The Chamber Supports	Region
Apprenticeship programs and experiential training offerings.	<b>F   L</b>
Expand accessibility of Pell Grants for students pursuing short-term certifications.	<b>F</b>
Pursuing all available federal support for workforce development and education programs.	<b>F</b>
The prioritization of Tinker K-8 School to increase capacity, update aging facilities and improve educational continuity for military families.	<b>F</b>
Bridging the digital divide.	<b>S</b>
Continuous policy guidance for schools related to COVID-19.	<b>S</b>
Expansion of online learning infrastructure.	<b>S</b>
Flexibility to implement the instructional requirements related to mental health education, substance abuse education, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and human trafficking education.	<b>S</b>
Including industry certification and skilled training in school and district grade calculations as an additional student success measure.	<b>S</b>
Legislation that authorizes public schools to offer coding as a second language and colleges/universities to accept coding as a foreign language credit.	<b>S</b>
Prioritization of early learning (Pre-K - 3), as per the Department of Education guidance.	<b>S</b>
Removal of punitive laws that suspend driver's licenses for non-payment of civil fines.	<b>S</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
STEM education programs, with an emphasis on starting in middle school, to strengthen equitable access to high quality workforce-related skill sets.	<b>S</b>
Funding for the successful consolidation of the University of South Florida under one accredited university.	<b>\$</b>
Innovation Grants for company relocation or expansion to be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Augmenting the hiring of students to work on those projects.</li> <li>» Office space on a college/university campus.</li> <li>» Research with professors applicable to business;.</li> </ul>	<b>\$</b>
Pursue state funds in support of district-identified pilot programs.	<b>\$</b>
The appropriation of funds to help alleviate the impact COVID-19 has had on school districts.	<b>\$</b>
Associate of Science dual enrollment course offerings.	<b>L</b>
Funding flexibility for multiple learning environments (virtual, e-learning, and in-person).	<b>L</b>
Incorporating Career and Technical Education curriculum at the K-12 level.	<b>L</b>
Targeted plans that create a skilled pipeline of talent to support and sustain Tampa Bay's ongoing economic development activities.	<b>L</b>



# WORKFORCE HOUSING

## Guiding Principle

Developing a sustainable inventory of workforce housing is vital to the continued growth and success of Tampa Bay’s business economy. Our region’s economic success and continued growth over the last twenty years have resulted in rising housing costs, forcing our workforce to live farther away from employment centers. Increasing the inventory of attainable housing for working families earning incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income, is critical to our region’s ability to attract and retain talent, improve quality of life, and to continue to successfully compete in the market economy.

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The Chamber Supports	Region
Pursuing any available federal funds that facilitate the development of, and access to, workforce housing, including leveraging additional federal matching and other federal grants with existing and new local funds and new local and nonprofit and other allocations for this purpose.	<b>F</b>
Legislation that prevents the Legislature from diverting the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund.	<b>S</b>
Policies and budget prioritization that facilitate the development of, and access to, workforce housing.	<b>S   L</b>
Waivers to activate irregular sized parcels for affordable and workforce housing.	<b>S   L</b>
Addressing infrastructure needs (storm water, sewer, water, lighting, and sidewalks).	<b>L</b>
Amendments to the City of Tampa’s and Hillsborough County’s Land Development Codes and Comprehensive Plans, which incentivize the development of workforce housing.	<b>L</b>

The Chamber Supports	Region
Clarity in the land use code to encourage mobility hubs.	<b>L</b>
Community Land Trust (CLT’s) creation for the purposes of keeping workforce housing in perpetuity.	<b>L</b>
Incentives for converting existing properties to workforce housing.	<b>L</b>
Density bonuses and the removal of parking minimums for developers building workforce housing.	<b>L</b>
Easing the process of pulling permits to assess project feasibility.	<b>L</b>
Exemptions from fees (sewer, impact, connection, utilities, and mobility) for workforce housing development.	<b>L</b>



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