

2022 PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM

The Reno+ Sparks Chamber of Commerce ("The Chamber") maintains strong working relationships with our elected officials at the municipal, state, and federal levels. We expect these leaders to advance public policies that support free enterprise, reduce regulatory burdens on businesses, and ensure a competitive business environment.

In northern Nevada, we must work together to ensure a robust economy while insisting our quality of life not be diminished. We've learned over the years that we're vulnerable to economic crises and the foundations of free enterprise must be maintained.

This Public Policy Platform informs our members, elected officials and their constituents about the positions of The Chamber on the numerous issues that we face as a business community. The Chamber advocates for solutions and opposes federal, state, and local government policies that are detrimental to the business community and our quality of life.

The following platform contains matters of significance to our wide range of 2,000+ members:



HEALTHCARE

Federal health insurance regulations should continue to enable this Chamber to offer its business members participation in its Chamber Association Health Care Plan. The Chamber Association Health Plan is one of the most affordable and comprehensive options for small businesses to provide insurance to employees.

The Chamber supports:

Greater funding for state programs that treat mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, veterans' and elder care, and the learning-challenged, as well as increased resources for the afflicted.

The ability of healthcare consumers to purchase insurance in a nationwide marketplace and to ensure fair share federal formulas for the Nevada Medicaid Program.

The availability of health savings accounts for employees.

Efforts to attract and license high quality medical providers in all disciplines of healthcare in the state.

Residential delivery of prescription drugs.

The Chamber opposes:

The designation of employer contributions to their employees' health care premiums as taxable income.

The implementation of the "Public Option" as it is described in SB420 from the 2021 Legislative Session.



TAXATION AND EFFICIENT, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

A strong, sustainable economy must be supported by a stable, broad-based and equitable tax system.

One specific industry should not be the target of new or increased taxes.

Taxes raised at the local level should be determined by elected branches of government.

The Nevada State Legislature shall make new laws and enforce limitations on referendums, initiatives, and constitutional amendments.

The Chamber supports:

Total disclosure and transparency by local governments on the financial impact of collective bargaining agreements.

Periodic and public review of public employee retirement and benefit programs to ensure approximate parity with private employers.

Property tax reform as a means by which to drive significant revenue for Nevada. The Chamber will provide education and information to its members to ensure a more thorough understanding of whom property tax reform would impact and under what circumstances.

The Chamber opposes:

Unfunded mandates passed down from the congressional or legislative bodies to local governments.

Personal or corporate income tax, and a margin or gross receipts tax. The Chamber supports the continuation of the Commerce Tax at the present level.

The Chamber encourages candidates with sufficient business experience to seek office and to represent the needs of small, medium and large companies.



LABOR AND MANAGEMENT

The Chamber supports:

The rights of management to recruit, hire, and terminate individuals "at will" provided such action is not discriminatory or in violation of any state or federal law.

Continuation of Nevada's "Right-to-Work" law.

A minimum wage for only entry and training-level employees. The Chamber favors wage increases that grow organically as a result of economic conditions and market competition.

The elimination of Nevada's daily overtime law.

Continued reform of state and federal prevailing wage laws to lower costs for continued growth and economic vitality.

A legal system that promotes economic growth and opportunity by supporting the enactment of common-sense pandemic related liability solutions for all businesses.

The Chamber opposes:

Any mandated scheduling laws that limit a business owner's ability to introduce flexible scheduling in response to business conditions.

Efforts to weaken the rights of employees to a secret ballot unionization process in an environment free from intimidation and coercion.

Harassment and bullying tactics of any kind, in any work, educational or professional environment.

Reporting of TIPS unless all TIP income is reported by all TIP earners.

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TOURISM AND ECONOMIC VITALITY

The Chamber works collaboratively with both the Reno/Tahoe Airport Authority and the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority to ensure a robust tourism and visitor environment. We must showcase our members' businesses and promote a strong and vibrant economy in our region.

The Chamber supports:

Cooperative efforts to diversify our region's economy and enhance quality career opportunities.

Efforts to develop and maintain an adequate supply of attainable/affordable workforce housing.

Regional cooperation and consolidation of services that result in improved value to residents and visitors to our region.

Initiatives such as online processing for obtaining business licenses and permits that support efficient economic development.

Economic initiatives that balance infrastructure development with our residents' continued ability to drive, walk, bike, shop, eat, recreate while enjoying a unique quality of life.

All businesses that are legally zoned and operated within the confines of code enforcement are permitted to do so within the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan.

Policies and initiatives that protect Nevada's public lands as a means to promote essential outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities for residents, visitors, and businesses.

The Chamber opposes:

Any governmental action that erodes free enterprise such as wage, price or rent controls and inclusionary zoning.

Efforts to erode financial support and resources for public safety entities at the state and local level.



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Students graduating from the Washoe County School District and Public Charter Schools shall be prepared for a career or post-secondary course of study that aligns with Nevada's growing workforce demands. Educational programs must incorporate greater emphasis on technical training and employability skills that include communication, decision making, time management and work standards. Vocational aspirations shall be identified as early as middle school with emphasis on both the student's future economic self-sufficiency and the community's economic well-being.

The Chamber of Commerce supports:
Increased K-12 school options including but not limited to Public Charter Schools, school vouchers and equitable and equal access to education.

The "Grade Level Reading by Third Grade Initiative" to increase high school completion rates and the prospect of future employment for graduates.

Workforce training that aligns with employers' needs based on accurate and timely local labor market data.

Employer-led "earn and learn" initiatives that include on-the-job training contracts and apprenticeships approved by the Labor Commissioner's Office.

More effective and efficient partnerships between education and workforce systems.

Full accountability and transparency for all WC-1 capital dollars.

Legislative efforts to diversify the funding streams for school construction and maintenance.

Legislative efforts that support increased per pupil funding in schools by implementing efficiencies and distribution without increasing or creating new taxes.

Transparent governance and mechanisms for the distribution of federal funding for schools.



RENEWABLE, CLEAN ENERGY, WATER AND AIR QUALITY

Nevada currently enjoys some of the lowest average electricity rates in the country and is a leader in solar and renewable energy development. The Chamber will continue to encourage the growth of clean energy by means of rooftop commercial and residential solar, small wind, geothermal and other renewable resources.

The Chamber supports:

Recent legislative efforts to increase electric transmission projects in rural Nevada and the continued efforts to become more reliant on renewable resources and result in energy efficiencies.

Encouraging members to support technological innovations and efforts to electrify the transportation sector.

Solutions that assist with the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Mining the abundant "critical minerals" needed to utilize new technologies including lithium and other elements widely available in the state.

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in business operations, unless removal has a disparate impact on consumers or disadvantaged communities.

Transparent energy policies that include well-designed market mechanisms and a fair regulatory environment.

Consolidated regional planning for water, air, and flood control with long-range planning taking precedence over short-term solutions.

R E N O + S P A R K S



GROWTH, EXPANSION & HOUSING:

The Chamber represents businesses in communities that continue to grow at an incredible pace. The median price of a residential property remains above \$500,000 and the market has driven costs for rental properties to an all-time high.

Great efforts are being made to redevelop the urban core and to build projects on existing, vacant properties. New development is good but can create unintended consequences that must be evaluated prior to putting a shovel in the ground.

State and local governments along with numerous non-profit organizations have made tremendous investments that provide services for the homeless, but the issue continues to grow and impact every aspect of our community. Massive, temporary shelters are a band-aid and more attention must be paid to provide education and workforce training opportunities to those capable of working.

The Chamber supports:

Washoe County, Reno, and Sparks leadership working closely with our Federal delegation to establish a balanced approach to the acquisition and use of federal lands.

The proposed Truckee Meadows Public Lands Management Act provided it preserves access to traditionally public lands for recreational, historical, and tribal purposes while enabling private developers to build residential housing and scenic-appropriate commercial development.

A reduction in the cost of acquiring construction permits from Washoe County, Reno, Sparks and the District Board of Health.

Governments working together to plan and implement sustainable growth initiatives that promote residential and commercial construction while preserving natural resources such as water and air quality.

Continued work by EDawn to attract and retain companies and industries that offer wages that reflect the high cost of living in our community.

Business Improvement Districts that maintain legal restrictions against pan-handling, vagrancy and other illegal activities.

Factoring air quality and access to limited water supplies into all aspects of our growth and economic development planning.

Increased funding for highway and transportation projects and public-private partnerships that result in innovative solutions. Solutions must maintain the efficient flow of commerce, residential traffic, and tourism while preventing impediments to safe and efficient road services and delivery systems.

Fair and equitable allocation of federal and state resources

for all public works projects, with special emphasis on equitable and alternative modes of transportation



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The criminal justice system is integral to public safety for businesses and our community.

The Chamber supports:

Strong regulations, enforcement and consistent funding for law enforcement.

"Specialty Courts" that provide offenders of non-violent, low-level crimes the opportunity to be rehabilitated and become productive members of society.

Prison and parole reform that reflects a greater emphasis on realistic sentencing, rehabilitation that offers job skills training, and lower cost alternatives to traditional incarceration.

Public service work for certain offenders as part of their sentencing with the emphasis on community service and reduction of costs to taxpayers.

The Chamber opposes efforts to reform the bail system that will allow the early release of high level, violent criminals into our community. Public safety and victims' rights must be a serious consideration when considering changes to the system.



IMMIGRATION

The Chamber supports:

Flexible legal immigration laws that enable employers to recruit and employ workers based on professional service requirements and market demand.

The establishment of a comprehensive guest worker program that requires full identification and adherence to federal laws by workers who come from outside the United States.

Penalties for employers that knowingly hire illegal workers if they have the resources available to effectively and accurately determine the legal status of potential employees



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Chamber celebrates and respects the diversity of its membership. Diversity drives innovation and entrepreneurship and represents a key component of our longevity and success. Chamber members build workplace cultures of diversity and inclusion where differences are recognized and valued.

The Chamber will strive to grow our membership, programs, and resources in ways that reflect the diversity of the community and celebrate the accomplishments of the community we serve.