



Waterbury Regional Chamber
driving business to business

The Waterbury Regional Chamber's 2018 Legislative and Regional Agenda



Vice Chairman Public Policy
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SEARCHING FOR FISCAL STABILITY

Connecticut reached a historic crossroads in 2017, as the legislature and Governor's Office again battled large deficits and fiscal uncertainty. That battle left the state without a budget for 123 days into the new fiscal year, making Connecticut last in the nation to approve a plan.

While no budget is perfect, the plan achieved some key goals the Waterbury Regional, Naugatuck and Watertown Oakville Chambers has long advocated for — including an enforceable constitutional spending cap; an annual bonding cap, and requiring the legislature to vote on state employee union contracts — but more needs to be done to create a stable and predictable fiscal and business climate. The Chamber supports the work of the new **Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth**, and encourages members of our legislative delegation to give full consideration to the recommendations the commission is required to provide the legislature by March 1, 2018.

Below are the Chamber's **2018 State Policy Objectives**; on the back are specific changes and programs we support, including those at the regional and local levels.



Director of Public Policy
DAVID KRECHEVSKY
Waterbury Regional Chamber

2018 STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES



1. Taxing & Spending

Reduce the cost of government by controlling state and municipal employee wage and pension costs; create tax policies that encourage business investment and job creation



2. Labor & Employment

Develop policies that promote creating and retaining jobs and reduce administrative costs; adequately fund, but without bonding, demonstrably successful workforce development/training programs



3. Education

Support adequate funding for public institutions of higher education while working to reduce costs and improve efficiencies; create a balanced approach for public, private, for-profit & nonprofit post-secondary schools



4. Manufacturing

Prioritize funding for STEM/Trade education and training; adequately fund programs that support manufacturing jobs & incumbent worker training

2018 State Policy Objectives



5. Healthcare

Support policies that improve quality and access to care while reducing the cost of care; prioritize funding for mental health & addiction services



6. Economic Development & Tourism

Prioritize infrastructure maintenance and repair; support transportation-oriented development; enhance tourism revenue and jobs by properly funding state marketing efforts



7. Energy & Environment

Adequately fund programs that help reduce energy usage and cost; support remediation and redevelopment of brownfields



8. Regulatory Reform

Promote business development & job creation by reducing or eliminating unnecessary or outdated regulations



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WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER'S 2018 STATE AND REGIONAL AGENDA

Taxing & Spending

- Oppose new tax increases;
- Support tax policies that encourage investment in job-creation and apprenticeship;
- Create tax incentives for engineering and science students at Connecticut colleges and universities to accept employment in Connecticut upon graduation.

Labor & Workforce Development

- Oppose expansion of workers' compensation benefits;
- Oppose increases to the state's minimum wage;
- Support and fund demonstrably successful workforce development & training programs;
- Support requiring companies that receive state contracts to hire Connecticut residents first.

Education

- Maintain funding for vocational-technical schools and advanced manufacturing programs at Naugatuck Valley Community College and other community colleges.

Manufacturing

- Maintain funding for on-site apprentice training and development; review and update apprenticeship supervisory work-site ratios for on-site apprentice training and development;
- Support initiatives of the Legislature's Manufacturing Caucus.

Healthcare

- Convene a group of stakeholders to work with the state to produce a comprehensive plan to address the exponential growth in the Medicaid program;
- Establish a date to sunset the hospital provider tax and provide full funding of Medicaid reimbursement obligations to ensure financial viability of our hospitals;
- Use Waterbury's model for healthcare spending reform to save on state retiree healthcare costs;
- Support a two-year moratorium on new insurance mandates.

Economic Development & Tourism

- Support downtown Waterbury revitalization efforts, including the Waterbury Next initiative, repurposing bus stops to be more efficient and moving the system's pulse point from the Green, and development of a Multi-Modal Transportation Center and the Waterbury Rail Branch Line;
- Maintain funding for evening bus service in Waterbury, and approve the matching funds needed to support bus service on Lakewood Road and in the city's South End;
- Support Main Street Waterbury's efforts to revitalize the downtown central business district that include promoting mixed-use and transit-oriented development and market-rate housing; also support CT Main Street Center and its efforts to revitalize downtown districts statewide;
- Support The Arts and Culture Collaborative of the Waterbury Region;
- Support Naugatuck's efforts to revitalize its downtown, its transportation-oriented development plans and its proposed rail improvements for the Port of Naugatuck,
- Support Watertown and Oakville economic development efforts to revitalize its downtown.

Energy & Environment

- Restore diverted funds to CT Energy Efficiency Fund and the CT Green Bank;
- Support continued state investment in Brownfields remediation, and work with our federal delegation to ensure federal funding is available;
- Support expediting environmental permits required for business starts and expansion;
- Support the Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Project.

Regulatory Reform

- Institute reciprocity of licensure in Connecticut for professions and trades licensed by other states;
- Support a two-year suspension of costly unfunded state mandates.



Naugatuck Chamber
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Watertown Oakville Chamber
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For information, contact

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