



Waterbury Regional Chamber  
*driving business to business*

# The Waterbury Regional Chamber's 2019 Legislative and Regional Agenda



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## SEARCHING FOR FISCAL STABILITY

Connecticut begins 2019 with a new governor and a new General Assembly, but with the same lingering fiscal crisis that has plagued the state for a decade. The year began with the state facing a \$4.6 billion deficit in the next two fiscal years.

In the past two years, the state finally approved some key policy goals our Chamber 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 remains to be done to create the stable and predictable fiscal climate so desperately sought by businesses and individual taxpayers. The Chamber continues to support the **Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth**, and we encourage members of our legislative delegation to fully consider the recommendations the commission presented to the legislature last year.

Below are the Chamber's **2019 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

## 2019 STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES



### 1. Taxing & Spending

Reduce the cost of government by controlling state employee wage and pension costs; create tax policies that encourage business investment and job creation; replace collective bargaining on state employee contracts with administrative branch negotiation & keep required approval by legislative branch



### 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 equitable 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



### 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

Support transportation-oriented development initiatives; continue to support Brownfields remediation efforts; support jobs & enhance tourism revenue 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

Reduce or eliminate unnecessary/outdated regulations to promote business development & job creation; eliminate piecemeal approach to requirements that drag out permitting & approval of projects



### 9. Transportation & Infrastructure

Prioritize & fund infrastructure maintenance and repair projects; complete improvements to the Waterbury rail line

# WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER'S 2019 STATE AND REGIONAL AGENDA

## Taxing & Spending

- Oppose new taxes and tax increases;
- Support tax policies that encourage investment in job-creation and apprenticeship;
- Create tax incentives for STEM students at Connecticut colleges and universities to accept employment in Connecticut upon graduation;
- Support replacing collective bargaining for state employee contracts with administrative branch negotiation & retain required approval votes by both legislative chambers.

## Labor & Workforce Development

- Oppose expansion of workers' compensation benefits;
- Oppose increases to the state's minimum wage;
- Oppose mandating paid family & medical leave;
- Maintain funding for apprentice training & development;
- Support a review of and updates to apprenticeship hiring ratios;
- Support and fund demonstrably successful workforce development & training programs;
- Support "do no harm approach" to reforming the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund;
- Support requiring state contractors to hire Connecticut residents first.

## Education

- Maintain funding for vocational-technical schools and for advanced manufacturing programs at Naugatuck Valley Community College and other community colleges;
- Align school curricula with industry-sector workforce needs;
- Support efforts to prioritize & promote Allied Health four-year degree programs at UConn Waterbury;
- Fully fund the Educational Cost-Sharing grants to school districts.

## Manufacturing

- Maintain funding for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund;
- 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 Main Street Waterbury's efforts to revitalize the central business district;
- Support The Arts and Culture Collaborative of the Waterbury Region;
- Support Naugatuck's efforts to revitalize its downtown;
- Support Watertown and Oakville economic development efforts to revitalize its downtown.

## Energy & Environment

- Support continued state investment in Brownfields remediation, and work with our federal delegation to ensure federal funding is available;
- Restore the \$165 million removed from the state's energy efficiency programs;
- Support expediting environmental permits required for business starts and expansion;
- Support the Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Project and protect the region's waterways.

## 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;
- Support reducing/eliminating unnecessary or outdated regulations and streamlining permitting & approval processes
- Support prohibiting the state from altering approved contract terms without renegotiation.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

- Support developing a Multi-Modal Transportation Center and improvements to the Waterbury Rail Branch Line;
- Support scheduled maintenance & repairs for the I-84/Route 8 Mixmaster;
- Maintain funding for evening bus service in Waterbury, and approve matching funds needed to support bus service on Lakewood Road and in the city's South End;
- Support Naugatuck's transportation-oriented development plans and proposed rail improvements for the Port of Naugatuck
- If tolls are approved, support:
  - Limiting the number and location of highway tolls;
  - Requiring all highway toll receipts to be placed in the transportation fund "lock box";
  - Offsetting toll revenue with a corresponding reduction in the motor fuels tax, and
  - Allowing toll exemptions or tax credits for first responders and medical caregivers.

For information, contact

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**Naugatuck Chamber**  
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**Watertown Oakville Chamber**  
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