



Waterbury Regional Chamber
driving business to business

Waterbury Regional Chamber 2022 Legislative Agenda



Legislating in the Wake of the Pandemic

As we enter 2022, the state and nation continue to address the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. The Waterbury Regional Chamber, its affiliates, the Naugatuck Chamber and the Watertown Oakville Chamber, and our members remain hopeful that the pandemic will subside, but we nonetheless urge members of the state House and Senate to fulfill their roles in having a voice in determining policy and regulatory changes. We implore the Legislature and Governor Ned Lamont to understand the tremendous impact the pandemic has had on businesses in the state. It is vital to the state's economy to enact policies that not only help businesses survive but thrive as the economy recovers.



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Below are the Chamber's 2022 State Policy priorities and objectives; on the back are specific changes and programs we support, including those at the regional and local levels.

2022 STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES

<p>TAXES & SPENDING</p> <p>Reduce the cost of government by controlling state employee wage and pension costs; support tax policies that encourage business investment and job creation; create incentives to attract and retain college students upon graduation.</p>	<p>LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Develop policies that promote creating and retaining jobs and reduce administrative costs; adequately fund, but without bonding, demonstrably successful workforce development/training programs.</p>	<p>EDUCATION</p> <p>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 and nonprofit post-secondary schools.</p>
<p>MANUFACTURING</p> <p>Prioritize funding for STEM/trade education and training; adequately fund programs that support manufacturing jobs & incumbent-worker training.</p>	<p>HEALTH CARE & PUBLIC SAFETY</p> <p>Support policies that improve quality and access to care while reducing the cost of care; prioritize funding for mental health and addiction services; address juvenile crime accountability.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM</p> <p>Support transportation-oriented development initiatives; continue to support Brownfields remediation efforts; support jobs and enhance efforts to market Connecticut as a tourism destination.</p>
<p>ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Adequately fund programs that help reduce energy usage and cost; modernize regulations for the remediation and redevelopment of Brownfields.</p>	<p>REGULATORY REFORM</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate unnecessary or outdated regulations to promote business development and job creation; eliminate piecemeal approach to requirements that drag out permitting & approval of projects.</p>	<p>TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>Prioritize and fund infrastructure maintenance and repair projects; complete improvements to the Waterbury rail line; support policies that promote transit oriented development.</p>

For information, contact Waterbury Regional Chamber Public Policy Director Joseph Violette at 203-757-0701 or jviolette@waterburychamber.com

WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER 2022 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

TAXES & SPENDING

- Oppose new taxes and tax increases;
- Prudent and responsible allocation of one-time federal COVID relief funds;
- Repeal the corporate tax surcharge that was due to expire in 2020, but was extended through 2022;
- Expand the use of nonprofit organizations to deliver state services;
- Eliminate overtime and mileage in pension calculations;
- Support tax policies that encourage investment in job-creation and apprenticeships;
- Create tax incentives for STEM students at Connecticut colleges and universities to accept employment in Connecticut upon graduation;
- Repeal the 6.35% state sales tax on employment training and safety apparel, including personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Restore the pass-through entity tax credit to its original 93%;
- 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;
- Tailor workforce development programs to prioritize high-value, in-demand industries and focus on defined pathways for educational and career development;
- Support a update to apprenticeship hiring ratios;
- Oppose predictive scheduling policies;
- Support requiring state contractors to hire Connecticut residents first;
- Support reducing the minimum age to operate specific small machinery to 16 or 17 years old;
- Monitor the rollout and utilization of payroll tax funded Paid Family Leave and oppose shifting burden to employers.

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;
- Fully fund Educational Cost-Sharing grants to school districts and correct the inequities of the Educational Cost-Sharing formula;
- Support policies and initiatives that promote STEM and trade training opportunities for a post-high school career.

MANUFACTURING

- Maintain funding for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund;
- Maintain funding for apprentice training and development and remove barriers for apprenticeship training requirements;
- Support expanding the apprenticeship tax credit to C corporations and pass-through entities;
- Execute recommendations from the Manufacturing Technology Working Group's strategic plan;
- Support initiatives of the Legislature's Manufacturing Caucus;
- Support working with the CT Manufacturing Collaborative to develop ways to support manufacturers in the Connecticut;
- Support the state Chief Manufacturing Officer's efforts to expand promotion of and training for manufacturing careers in the state.
- Support the Northwest Regional Sector Partnerships in manufacturing.

HEALTH CARE & PUBLIC SAFETY

- Convene a group of stakeholders to work with the state to produce a comprehensive plan to address the exponential growth in the Medicaid program;
- Support measures that strengthen Connecticut hospitals and health systems and recognize their vital importance to the economy & health of local communities;
- Support a review of the state's policies for traveling nurses to ensure competitiveness for hospitals and healthcare workers;
- Support fully funding Medicaid reimbursement and increase provider reimbursement rates;
- Support requiring the state to strictly follow federal Medicaid reimbursement rules and guidelines and reject cost-settling on a "fee for service" rate-based reimbursement system;
- Maintain current funding levels for behavioral health care and oppose further reductions;
- Use Waterbury's model for healthcare spending reform to reduce state retiree healthcare costs;
- Support a two-year moratorium on new insurance mandates.
- Support the Northwest Regional Sector Partnerships in healthcare.
- Address the lack of accountability for juveniles who commit crimes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

- Support downtown Waterbury revitalization efforts, including Main Street Waterbury's efforts to revitalize the central business district;
- Support grants, tax credits and deferrals to help at-risk business sectors, such as restaurants and tourism, survive during the pandemic;
- Support Naugatuck's efforts to revitalize its downtown;
- Support economic development efforts to revitalize Watertown/Oakville downtown;
- Maintain the state's investment in the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to ensure quality counseling & technical support remains available to small businesses;
- Support the Arts & Culture Collaborative of the Waterbury Region.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- Review and modernize Brownfield remediation statutes and regulations, streamline permitting process, and conforming state rules to federal standards;
- Support expediting environmental permits required for business starts and expansion;
- Support the Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Project and protect the region's waterways;
- Monitor new data privacy provisions aimed at small and medium sized businesses.

REGULATORY REFORM

- Recognize equivalent out-of-state licenses for those moving here;
- Streamline the professional licensing process;
- Support a two-year suspension of costly unfunded state mandates;
- Support eliminating unnecessary/outdated regulations and streamlining permitting & approval processes.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support developing a Multi-Modal Transportation Center and continued improvements to the Waterbury Rail Branch Line by leveraging federal relief funds;
- Support on-time maintenance and 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 freight rail improvements for the Port of Naugatuck.

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