

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA **2017**

This Legislative Agenda is driven by results from a membership-wide survey and reflects the Greer business community's 2017 legislative priorities.

Education and Workforce Development

With the local unemployment rate under 5 percent, tens of thousands of jobs are going unfilled – and half of those jobs do not require college degrees. We need a fully funded education system from pre-kindergarten to post-college job training so we can train workers for 21st Century jobs. We also need to challenge the status quo and look at innovative ways to expand the workforce from within.

- a. **EFA Funding:** The Greater Greer Chamber and Upstate Chamber Coalition urges the General Assembly to fully fund the Education Finance Act, and will support efforts to reduce the gap between the amount required by state law and what is actually funded.
- b. **Expungement:** We support the expansion of expungement for one-time, non-violent offenders to expand our workforce.

Infrastructure

The Upstate is the best place to locate a business with access to an expanding port and 95 million people within a day's drive. That geographic advantage is slipping because we are neglecting basic government services. Our state must invest in our infrastructure if we're to expand our locational advantage. We also urge communities across the Upstate to support regional efforts to plan for our future transportation needs.

- a. **Gas Tax:** The Greater Greer Chamber and Upstate Chamber Coalition supports increasing the gas tax by 10 to 12 cents to provide a substantial, sustainable, and recurring funding source so DOT can work on the more than 85 percent of state roads rated "fair" or "poor." The Coalition also calls for the gas tax to be indexed for inflation, to ensure the buying power of the tax revenue keeps up with road building costs.
- b. **Capital Projects:** If the state will not act, the General Assembly must give municipalities the ability to enact capital projects sales taxes by referendum – the same power currently given to counties.

Taxes and Regulation

The Greater Greer Chamber and Upstate Chamber Coalition will work at the state and local levels to cut red tape for small business, make our region more economically competitive, and lower the barriers to entry for local entrepreneurs.

- a. **Headquarters tax credits:** Only one Fortune 500 headquarters is located in our state. We need to re-assess and expand our efforts to attract corporate headquarters to the Upstate.
- b. **High-impact company incentives:** South Carolina is aggressive in attracting manufacturing jobs – and we must continue to do so. However, we need to re-vamp our corporate incentive programs to focus on the high-impact companies which do not qualify for traditional incentive packages that focus on costly infrastructure.

c. **Business license fees:** The Greater Greer Chamber and Upstate Chamber Coalition supports streamlining and standardizing the business license fee process. We oppose intentional efforts to negatively impact municipal revenue since cities do not have full taxing authority. We will also aggressively seek compromise on which entity manages an online payment portal.

d. **Angel Investor Tax Credit Expansion:** The General Assembly needs to reauthorize the successful Angel Investor Tax Credit program that encourages South Carolinians to fund our own high-impact start-up companies.

Pension Crisis

Our state's unfunded public pension liability is a fiscal crisis that could dramatically increase costs for the business community. The General Assembly needs to tackle the issue in 2017 with realistic assumptions that will minimize the impact on the private sector. Failure to address this crisis will mean fewer resources to apply to education, infrastructure, and public safety.

Other Items to Watch

- a. Tax Study Committee
- b. Tort Reform
- c. Abbeville School Funding
- d. Market-Based Medicaid Reform Study
- e. Local Government Fund



Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce

111 Trade Street

Greer, SC 29651

P: 864.877.3131

F: 864.877.0961

www.greerchamber.com

"The Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce's mission is to champion economic prosperity for our members and the Greater Greer community."