



LEWISVILLE

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

State Legislative Agenda

81st Texas Legislative Session

The Chamber's Mission

To promote economic growth of the local business community.

Leading Business. Leading Lewisville.

Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce

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Creating a strong economy for the Lewisville Area is imperative for the Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber strives for a strong economy where companies can grow, prosper, and assist in making Lewisville an exceptional place to live and work. The Chamber is focused on a variety of priorities, including economic development, employment, environmental quality and transportation.

The following are the Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce's Top Priorities for the 81st Legislative Session:

1. **501(c)(6) Ad Valorem Taxation.** Support exemption from ad valorem taxation on property owned by a 501(c)(6) nonprofit community business organization that provides services to aid in economic development of local communities.
2. **Rail North Texas.** Support the initiatives of Rail North Texas to advance the development and funding of regional rail throughout the North Texas region.
3. **Right-to-work.** Support efforts to keep Texas a right-to-work state and oppose agency shop legislation.

The following is the Lewisville Area Chamber of Commerce's position, as voted on by the Chamber Board of Directors, on other issues concerning the wellbeing of the business community and economy of the Lewisville Area.

Economic Development

Sales Tax for Economic Development

- Support continued use of a locally approved 1/2 cent sales tax collected by cities to fund economic development efforts.
- Oppose efforts to reduce local control of these funds or efforts to limit the uses of these funds. Because these funds are local funds, taxpayers should retain the right to manage their use so long as they are used for economic development purposes.
- Support the removal of county average wage restrictions that limit a local government's use of these funds for local job training purposes.
- Support efforts to clarify that the purpose of the sales tax funds is to serve as economic development tools and to prevent raids on the funds for projects that are not related to economic development

Skills Development Program. Support increased funding for the Skills Development Program administered by the Texas Workforce Commission. Maintain Skills Development Fund grants at the Texas Workforce Commission to improve workforce training.

Tax abatements and other economic development incentives. Support local control and flexibility in the use of tax abatements, tax increment financing, reinvestment zones and other incentives to promote economic development and job creation. Additionally, support the ability of local taxing districts to phase in tax abatements. In recent years, Texas has seen its competitiveness fall in certain industries. We encourage the legislature to evaluate Texas' competitiveness and the role that taxes and other incentives play.

Tax incentives. Provide tax incentives to encourage business participation in education initiatives.

Texas Enterprise Fund. Support the continuation of and funding of the Texas Enterprise Fund.

Emerging Technology Fund. Support the continuation of and funding of the Emerging Technology Fund.

Education and Workforce

School Finance. Support legislation that stabilizes the school finance system, and support measures that give school districts local control and the flexibility to meet the needs of their students.

Accountability. Support efforts to make the education accountability system equal and fair for all schools, and oppose any measures to weaken the current education accountability system.

Communities In School. Support the Communities In Schools Program in Texas, a dropout prevention organization which focuses on helping young people to successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life.

Employment Relations

Drug testing. Oppose attempts to restrict the rights of employers to conduct random and/or universal drug testing of employees.

Employer control over work environment. Support efforts to maintain employers' prerogative to control the workplace, thereby creating a safe, satisfying and harmonious working environment.

Employment-at-will. Oppose legislation that would erode employment-at-will as a right for all Texas employers and employees.

Fraud control. Support legislation to allow TWC to hire outside contractors on a pay-for-performance basis to assist in efforts to detect and remedy unemployment benefits fraud.

Minimum wage. Oppose arbitrary increases in minimum wage which cannot be supported by improvements in productivity and which deprive many entry-level workers of job opportunities.

Property Rights of Business Owners. Support the right of employers to protect their employees, customers, suppliers and visitors by prohibiting employees from bringing firearms to work, including having guns in their vehicles in the parking facility.

Right-to-work. Support efforts to keep Texas a right-to-work state and oppose agency shop legislation.

Environmental Quality

Clean air. Support scientifically supportable and practicably achievable efforts to help areas which are in non-attainment come into attainment under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, help near non-attainment areas stay in attainment, ensure that the responsibility for emission reductions is shared equitably among all emission

sources, and assure that efforts toward cleaner air are directed in a manner that balances environmental gain with economic impact.

Incentives instead of mandates. Support incentives for business to meet and exceed environmental legal requirements, thereby increasing environmental effectiveness and operational flexibility.

Vehicle Emissions. Maintain and increase current funding amounts for the Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit, and Accelerated Retirement Program (LIRAP) and the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP).

Taxes & Spending

501(c)(6) Ad Valorem Taxation. Support exemption from ad valorem taxation on property owned by a 501(c)(6) nonprofit community business organization that provides services to aid in economic development of local communities.

Appraisal Caps. Oppose Appraisal Caps because of their unintended effects on business, government and the real estate industry, as well as their negative impacts to a fair and comparable appraisal process for all.

Franchise (margin) tax--Rebating excess revenue. Support rebating to taxpayers any excess revenue collected from the franchise (margin) tax.

Incentives. Support government tax policy that is effective in increasing investment to create new jobs and expand economic activity. This would include specific exemptions, like those for manufacturing use, construction and electricity use, as well as, reasonable abatements, enterprise funds, and reinvestment zones.

Mandates. Oppose unfunded government mandates which shift the cost of financing programs to either the private sector or other levels of government.

Small business tax relief. Maintain franchise (margin) tax relief for small business.

Transportation

Resource Diversion. Oppose the continued diversion of transportation resources.

Rail North Texas. Support the initiatives of Rail North Texas to advance the development and funding of regional rail throughout the North Texas region.