





2024 - 2025 PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM



The Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce maintains strong working relationships with our elected officials at the municipal, county, state and federal levels. We expect these leaders to advance public policies that support free enterprise, reduced regulatory burdens on businesses, and magnify a robust business environment.



This Public Policy Platform informs our members, elected officials and their constituents on the positions of the Reno + Sparks Chamber regarding numerous issues and challenges we are prepared to address for the betterment of our community and state. Our Chamber will continue to advocate for bipartisan solutions and commits to advocacy on behalf of all members.

HEALTHCARE

The Chamber Supports:

Federal health insurance regulations that enable this Chamber of Commerce to offer its members participation in the Reno + Sparks Chamber Association Health Care Plan, open to any Chamber member statewide. It has the most affordable and comprehensive options for small businesses (2-50 employees) to provide medical, dental, vision, and life insurance to their employees and to level the playing field when recruiting alongside larger companies.

More funding for state programs that address mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, veterans' services, child care, elder care, and the learning-challenged.

The advancement of social and emotional intelligence achieved in pre-schools and encourages the use of vouchers and extended income eligibility for childcare subsidies to 85%.

Innovative incentives and rewards that improve the recruitment of more medical professionals to our community.

The expansion of employee wellness programs that reduce the harmful effects of various substances, including cigarette smoking in the workplace.

Federal and state policies that will lower the prices of prescription drugs in the state.

Residential delivery of prescription drugs.

The ability of healthcare consumers to purchase insurance in a nationwide marketplace and to ensure fair share federal formulas for the Nevada Medicaid Program.

The availability of health savings accounts for employees.

The ability for healthcare providers to submit prescriptions electronically.

Free access to feminine hygiene products, services and contraception.

The Chamber Opposes:

The implementation of the "Public Option" as stated in Senate Bill 420 from the 2021 legislative session.

Any effort to destabilize Association Health Plans and the products they provide Chamber members.

The designation of employer contributions to their employees' health care premiums as taxable income.

TAXATION & EFFICIENT, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

The Chamber Supports:

A strong, sustainable economy supported by a stable, broad-based and equitable tax system.

Taxes raised at the local level as determined by elected branches of government.

Total transparency by local governments on the financial impact of collective bargaining agreements.

Periodic and public review of public employee retirement and benefit programs to ensure approximate parity with private employers.

Candidates with sufficient business experience to seek office and to represent the needs of small, medium and large companies.

The continuation of the Commerce Tax at its present level.

The Chamber Opposes:

Unfunded mandates passed down from congressional or legislative bodies to local governments.

Personal or corporate income tax, and a margin or gross receipts tax.

ECONOMIC VITALITY & TOURISM

The Chamber Supports:

Continued collaboration with the Reno/Tahoe Airport Authority, the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada and the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority to enhance a robust travel, tourism, and business environment.

Greater recognition for the vital role played by our hotels, casinos, and entertainment venues as critical revenue resources for Nevada.

The establishment of a four-year post-secondary hospitality program in northern Nevada that produces graduates capable of career positions in hotel management, food and beverage operations, entertainment, catering, finance, room management and an assortment of middle to senior-level positions equipped to replace an aging workforce in our vital tourism and hospitality sector.

Economic initiatives that ensure adequate infrastructure improvements completed in advance by developers that provide residents the ability to drive, walk, bike, shop, eat, and recreate while enjoying a unique lifestyle in their respective communities.

Cooperative efforts to diversify our region's economy and enhance quality career opportunities without focusing efforts on one significant business sector to the detriment of others.

Efforts to develop and maintain an adequate supply of attainable/affordable, workforce housing so working Nevadans choose to remain here as do their families.

State and regional efficiencies and consolidation of services that result in improved value to residents.

Initiatives that support efficient economic development, such as online processing for obtaining business licenses and permits.

Policies and initiatives that protect Nevada's public lands as a means to promote outdoor recreational opportunities for residents, visitors, and future generations.

The Chamber Opposes:

Elected officials serving as voting members on the Board of the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority and utilizing room tax revenue to fund municipal and county projects.

Any governmental action that erodes free enterprise such as wage, price, rent controls and inclusionary zoning.

Efforts to erode financial support and resources for public safety entities at the state and local level.

LABOR & MANAGEMENT

The Chamber Supports:

Organic wage growth for entry-level employees in on-site job training or temporary summer employment. The Chamber favors organic wage growth driven by economic conditions and market-based competition.

The rights of management to recruit, hire, and terminate individuals "at will" provided such action is not discriminatory or in violation of any state or federal law.

Continuation of Nevada's "Right-to-Work" law.

The elimination of Nevada's daily overtime law.

The Chamber Opposes:

Any mandated scheduling laws that limit a business owner's ability to introduce flexible scheduling in response to business conditions.

Efforts to weaken the rights of employees to a secret ballot unionization process in an environment free from intimidation and coercion.

Harassment and bullying tactics of any kind, in any work, educational or professional environment.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber Supports:

Educational programs that incorporate greater emphasis on technical and vocational training that can lead to higher-level employment and lifetime career opportunities. Career aspirations should be explored and identified as early as middle school in collaboration with businesses, Chambers of Commerce, the trades, apprenticeship programs, and internships.

More effective collaboration between statewide Chambers of Commerce and employers to identify open positions, qualifications, new industries, and much-needed trade occupations in our community.

More effective partnership between the local school district and our Chamber of Commerce to inspire workforce planning by implementing workforce “career days” beginning in middle school.

Increased K-12 school options including, but not limited to, Public Charter Schools, school vouchers and equal access to education.

“Nevada’s Read-By-Grade-3 Program” to increase childhood reading capabilities and students who are prepared to graduate with the necessary skills for adulthood and the workplace.

The ability of school principals in concert with teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, and the child’s family to require a student to repeat a grade in order to ensure effective preparedness for moving to the next academic level.

Full accountability and transparency for the use of all U.S. Department of Labor funding directed to workforce development and training programs with measurable deliverables that demonstrate the effectiveness of training and placement in career-oriented positions.

Consolidation of multiple state agencies all of which have a portion of their funding and staff dedicated to workforce development, leading to duplication of efforts and confusion on the part of job seekers.

Legislative mandates that support increased per pupil funding by implementing efficiencies and outcomes without increasing or creating new taxes.

Employer-led “earn and learn” programs that include “on-the-job training” and official apprenticeship programs identified and accredited by the Nevada Labor Commissioner.

Attention and efforts made to develop affordable and multi-family housing that will enable families or guardians to afford child or elder care services so they may enter or reenter the workforce.

Investments in educational/certificate training for home care workers to earn living wages while providing elder or child care.

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

The Chamber Supports:

The growth of clean energy technologies and expansion of Nevada’s clean energy economy.

Recent legislative efforts to increase electric transmission projects and the continued efforts to become energy-independent by prioritizing renewable energy resources.

Development of utility scale solar, geothermal, wind, and storage technologies on private and public lands and exporting the energy outside of the state for the benefit of the ratepayer.

Encouraging members to support technological innovations and efforts to electrify the transportation sector across the state.

The development of EV charging stations and infrastructure for all technologies.

Solutions that assist with the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Mining the abundant “critical minerals” needed to utilize new technologies, including lithium and other elements widely available in the state.

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES (CONT.)

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in business operations, particularly those that have a disparate impact on businesses, consumers or disadvantaged communities.

Continuation of its "Green Business Certificate" and "Green Dining District" training programs to prepare businesses for environmental challenges and consumer priorities.

Transparent energy policies that include well-designed market mechanisms and a fair regulatory environment.

Consolidated regional planning for water, air, and flood control with long-range planning taking precedence over short-term solutions.

The development of wildlife crossings for the safe migration of wild animals along busy roads and highways.

Federal, state and local government actions and policies that support growth of natural wildlife species in the region.

Promotion, conservation and management policies that support urban and rural outdoor recreation activities.

GROWTH & EXPANSION

The Chamber Supports:

Leadership from Washoe County, City of Reno, and the City of Sparks working closely with our federal delegation to establish a balanced approach to the acquisition and use of federal lands.

Continued work by EDawn and GOED to attract companies and industries that recognize the high cost of living for their employees and ameliorate the unintended consequences of rapid growth by building workforce housing and /or childcare facilities, adequate infrastructure and broadband expansion that accommodate large numbers of new residents.

Fair and equitable allocations of federal and state resources for all public works projects, with particular emphasis on equitable and alternative modes of transportation, particularly in underserved communities.

Cooperative efforts to diversify our community's economy and enhanced employment opportunities by providing greater financial support to local/small businesses rather than out-of-state corporations that request and receive state tax abatements and incentives.

Plans to develop affordable workforce housing in order to attract employees for all industry sectors vital to our economic well-being, including but not limited to: hospitality and tourism, transportation, retail, education, medical and mental health services, education, the trades, manufacturing, distribution, and technology.

Initiatives that create greater efficiency for business development, such as online processing for business licenses and permits.

A reduction in the cost of acquiring construction permits from Washoe County, Cities of Reno and Sparks, and Northern Nevada Public Health.

Business Improvement Districts that maintain legal restrictions against pan-handling, vagrancy, and other illegal activities and promote a healthy and vibrant community.

All business that are legally zoned and operated within the boundaries of code enforcement are permitted to do so without undue interference or random petitions to eliminate them.

The Chamber Opposes:

Government action that erodes free enterprise such as wage, price, and rent controls.

Efforts to decrease financial support and resources for public safety and law enforcement entities at the state and local levels.

Economic growth that fails to anticipate plans for necessary infrastructure development (affordable housing, road, schools, childcare facilities, access to healthcare and public transportation) and undermines our residents' ability to enjoy a quality of life threatened by unrelenting growth.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Chamber Supports:

A criminal justice system that is integral to public safety for businesses and residents.

Strong regulations, enforcement and consistent funding for law enforcement.

“Specialty Courts” that provide offenders of non-violent, low-level crimes the opportunity to participate in rehabilitation programs and become productive members of society.

Prison and parole reform that reflects a greater emphasis on realistic sentencing, rehabilitation that offers job skills training, job placement, and lowers cost alternatives to traditional incarceration.

Public service work for certain offenders as part of their sentencing with the emphasis on community service and reduction of costs to taxpayers.

The Chamber Opposes:

Efforts to reform the bail system that will allow the early release of high level, violent criminals into our community. Public safety and victims’ rights must be serious considerations should efforts be made to change the system.

IMMIGRATION

The Chamber Supports:

Flexible legal immigration laws that enable employers to recruit and employ workers based on professional service requirements and market demand.

The establishment of a comprehensive guest worker program that requires full identification and adherence to federal laws by workers who come from outside the United States.

Penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal workers if they have the resources available to easily and accurately determine the legal status of potential employees.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Chamber Supports:

Celebration and respect for the diversity of its membership. Diversity drives innovation and entrepreneurship and represents a key component of our longevity and success. Chamber members build workplace cultures of diversity and inclusion where differences are recognized and valued.

The Chamber will strive to grow our membership, programs, and resources in ways that reflect the diversity of the community we serve and its robust economic growth.

The Chamber Opposes:

Any member or employee of a member who utilizes “free speech” as an excuse to cause personal or physical harm, create mayhem, spread falsehoods, or commit acts of violence in our community.

ELECTIONS

The Chamber Supports:

Existing state law that allows for early voting, mail in voting, and in-person Election Day voting by registered voters.

Reasonable policies and regulations put forth by the Nevada Secretary of State to upgrade the existing technology used to manage registered voter rolls, efficiency in ballot tabulation and transparency.

The Chamber Opposes:

Any effort to publish false information about a candidate, initiative or election effort.

CIVILITY AND CIVIL DISCOURSE

The Chamber Supports:

Robust and candid dialogue driven by a code of conduct that represents the best of a free and fair democracy. Our voice and visibility should create a symbiotic community of common causes rather than one of divisive rhetoric and civic discord.