**Manatee Chamber of Commerce**

**2021 State and Federal Business Agenda**

**Business Resiliency and Taxation**

**State**

* Supports legislation requiring the collection of sales tax on all internet sales into the state.
* Supports Florida’s housing trust funds (Sadowski Act) to be used solely for housing programs.
* Supports liability protections for businesses and employers from COVID related litigation.
* Supports legislation that would continue to reduce the Commercial Lease Tax (Business Rent Tax) to reach eventual elimination, including usage of sales tax on internet sales (if passed) to accelerate the reduction.
* Supports legislation that would continue to reduce the Communication Services Tax (CST).
* Supports continued reduction of Florida’s corporate income tax.

**Federal**

* Supports modifications to the social benefits system that will allow for a gradual exit-path for working families, including enhanced access to childcare benefits.
* Supports liability protections for businesses and employers from COVID related litigation.
* Supports public policy action that defines the joint employer standard as “direct and immediate control” over workers’ terms and conditions of employment.

**Economic Development**

* Supports grant funding to develop workforce training programs and community infrastructure.
* Supports Enterprise Florida to proactively market the state as a business destination and incentivize corporations to relocate to Florida.
* Supports Visit Florida to ensure the state is a premier destination for visitors nationally and internationally.
* Supports flexible state disaster business loan parameters including extending the loan payoff timeframe and/or reducing the interest rate incurred due to the nature and longevity of business recovery after disasters.
* Supports efforts to enhance support infrastructures that serve residents and businesses during disasters and other significant economic downturns.
* Support 2-year extensions for businesses who have an active Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund to promote the retention of those companies who were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Education & Workforce Innovation**

**Early Learning**

* Supports legislation to improve access to high quality early learning, accountability measures for school readiness, including Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten readiness, and support for grade-level reading.
* Supports a needs-based School Readiness Funding Formula to provide a proportional allocation of funding across the state.

**K-12**

* Supports per-student funding at a 2020 equivalent level to account for a progressively increased cost of living combined with limited changes in funding per student.
* Supports legislation to include career dual-enrolled students in the acceleration calculation for state high school grades, which is currently provided for academic dual-enrolled students.
* Supports funding for all Florida’s Public Technical College/Centers Workforce Education Programs at a minimum funding level of 100% of the state model as developed and approved by the State FLDOE Workforce Education Funding Committee.
* Supports Community Partnership School programs as a comprehensive model to meet identified community needs.

**Higher Ed**

* Supports funding local higher education initiatives that provide skill training to residents displaced from the workforce and to meet critical employment needs.
* Supports Incentive Florida college scholarships for students pursuing careers teaching in Florida public schools for at least 10 years.
* Supports the bonding of Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds for workforce education projects and to address critically deferred maintenance.

**Workforce**

* Supports pre-apprenticeship programs with industry stakeholders.
* Supports legislation and investments in workforce education programs for performance-based industry certifications and employment in high demand fields including STEM related careers.
* Support a reduction in the minimum instructional hours required for Pell eligibility to increase access to workforce training programs. (Pell grants driven at the federal level).
* Supports the pursuit of attainable housing solutions for our workforce and residents’ housing needs.

**Health & Workforce Wellness**

**State**

* Supports measures that positively impact access to care and outcomes, including innovative programs, pilot projects, and new technology including telehealth.
* Supports a Florida-based solution to capitalize on federal dollars available to increase coverage and improve access for Florida’s uninsured residents, including updating the Medicaid reimbursement rate to increase access for residents within the program and adequately compensate providers.
* Supports incentivizing employers to offer wellness, prevention, and primary care resources to their employees.
* Urges the use of opioid-related Florida Trust Funds solely for substance abuse prevention and treatment.
* Supports measures to expand access to long-term and acute behavioral health treatment focused on addiction, mental health, and suicide prevention, including funding to address the mental health crisis occurring at the VPK through high school levels.
* Supports measures to encourage additional medical residency slots, including the Psychiatry specialty, to attract more physicians to Florida, create jobs, and slow our rate of exporting Florida-educated physicians to other states.

**Federal**

* Advocates collaborative solutions to support greater access, increased quality, and a reduction in overall per-patient cost of care with the input of all stakeholders, including options for small businesses and their employees to participate in association health plans.
* Supports measures to expand access to behavioral health and mental health-related services and advocates for additional per capita funding to address substance abuse prevention and treatment.
* Supports enforcement of existing parity laws to provide greater access to behavioral health care for individuals and families.
* Supports measures that positively impact affordability of and access to care and drive quality health outcomes for all, including medical research, innovative programs, and pilot projects.
* Supports legislation to curb surprise billing through the implementation of a process for doctors and insurance companies to follow to negotiate billing disputes.

**Natural Resources**

**State**

* Supports measures related to improving water quality.
* Supports the allocation of funding for water resource projects including water quality improvement with a focus on reducing harmful algal blooms and alternative water supply development.

**Federal**

* Supports measures related to improving water quality.
* Supports the allocation of grant funding to businesses for red tide recovery.
* Supports legislation that creates a more transparent regulatory process with increased accountability as well as reduced costs and unnecessary burdens on stakeholders.
* Supports continued federal funding, in conjunction with Port Manatee’s dredged material management facility improvements, to provide and transport dredged material to be beneficially used for Washington Park, Palmetto restoration.
* Opposes gas or oil drilling within 125 miles of the Florida Coast.

**Transportation & Infrastructure**

**State**

* Advocates the use of all of the Transportation Trust Funds available to support transportation projects in the FDOT work program.
* Supports expansion of east-west state highways including SR 64, SR 70, and 44th Avenue, and county road 683.
* Supports funding and expediting the replacement of the DeSoto Bridge and consideration of all alternatives that will maximize north/south capacity on the U.S. 41 corridor.
* Supports funding the construction phase of the Anna Maria and Cortez Bridge projects including a ‘bus-on-shoulder’ lane for emergency vehicles and future transit alternatives.
* Supports measures that increase broadband accessibility including encouraging private investment in the deployment of infrastructure in rural and underserved areas.

**Federal**

* Supports legislation that authorizes a sustainable revenue stream, including collection of funding from all modes of transportation, for local and state governments to improve aging transportation infrastructure.
* Supports federal funding for continued operation and maintenance of the Manatee Harbor entrance channel including adequate dredged material disposal capacity at Port Manatee.
* Supports funding for coastal resiliency needs, including the analysis of surface and sub-surface infrastructure.