

# 2023 State Legislative Agenda

The Austin Chamber of Commerce encourages legislators to work in a bipartisan manner to advance policies that strengthen our economy, create good-paying jobs, support small businesses and boost state investments into our education system. Central Texas has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. The entire state benefits from this economic growth and the Legislature plays an important role in passing legislation that improves the lives of all Texans and ensures that Central Texas remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.



## EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES

### Economic Development Incentives

Support and extend incentives that attract employers, create jobs, and fuel manufacturing, industry and capital investment, including a limited school property tax abatement incentive. Boost funding for:

- Texas Enterprise Fund
- Skills Development Fund
- Film Incentives

### Workforce Development

The Austin Chamber supports policies and programs that bolster our local workforce, strengthen Texas' talent pipeline and prepare our students and workers for careers in high demand fields. The Legislature should advance policies that support Texas' childcare infrastructure, which is critical to supporting parents in the workforce.

### Education

State investment in K-12 students and teachers is critically important to improving education outcomes. The Legislature should increase basic allotment and restore, update a cost of education index, and invest in teachers to ensure that public schools across Texas have the workforce and resources needed to succeed.

### 21st Century Infrastructure

The Austin Chamber supports increased investments in transformational and critical infrastructure that promote regional connectivity, enhance public safety, keep pace with population growth and economic opportunity.

### Tech & Manufacturing

The Legislature should support state programs and legislation that enable Texas semiconductor companies to access CHIPS Act funding. The Austin Chamber supports policies that boost advanced manufacturing and Central Texas' growing high-tech economy.

## KEY LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

### — Affordable Housing

The Legislature should address the dramatic increases in housing costs for both renters and homeowners, and advance policies that ensure the Greater Austin region is affordable for all. Amend the "two-mile rule" which restricts affordable housing development.

### — Property Tax Relief

Texas was the #1 State in America for GDP growth in 2021, and the Legislature should ensure that our state remains business friendly and competitive with its low tax burden. The Legislature should consider policies that lead to property tax relief for businesses and homeowners.

### — Reduce Traffic

The Austin Chamber supports continued efforts to allocate additional funding for Propositions 1 & 7 for projects designed to relieve congestion in Texas' largest urban areas and support extension past sunset dates.

### — Secure the Grid

The Legislature should pursue policies that increase grid reliability while keeping costs affordable for businesses and Texans. This should include building transmission line capacity and encourage continued investment in clean and renewable energy sources.

### — Racial & Social Equity

The Austin Chamber opposes discrimination in all forms and encourages the Legislature to reject racism and bigotry and address systemic inequities in our society. The Legislature should identify ways to expand access to employment opportunities, reduce inequities in housing, health care, education and housing and protect the civil rights of all Texans.

### — Water

Extreme drought and population growth compel the need for Central Texas water suppliers and utilities to partner with the state to invest in water infrastructure and water conservation throughout Central Texas.

### — Health Care

To promote wellness, lower costs and expand access to care, the Legislature should consider policies that reduce the number of uninsured Texans while maintaining affordable coverage options. Further, the Austin Chamber opposes efforts to limit or restrict employee benefits and healthcare coverage options available to Texas employers.

### — College Affordability

Invest in financial aid programs – Texas Grants, TEOG and TEGs – that make college and career training affordable for Texas families.

### — Reform Recapture

The Legislature should consider reforming recapture to ensure that more local tax collections stay with local schools. Further, the Legislature should restore a pre-payment discount to reduce the burden of recapture on schools.