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## Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

# LEGISLATIVE



# AGENDA

## 2009

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The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce's 2009 Legislative Agenda represents the Chamber's commitment to creating an improved business climate and quality of life for our region.

The issues in this agenda are based on surveys and input from Chamber members from our annual survey of the membership as well as the work and recommendation of various volunteer committees and task forces. In May, the Chamber Board of Directors takes all the research and information gathered and sets the priorities for the Chamber through the development of the annual Program of Work. Based upon the four-year Strategic Plan, the Program of Work outlines the focus of the Chamber's programs for the coming 12 months. By identifying the key issues of the membership and reviewing the overall strategic goals, the Board helps Public Policy to begin focusing on issues.

In late summer the Public Policy Committee begins its work for the new program year, often with briefings on various issues followed by discussion as to which issues to add to the annual agenda. The Public Policy Committee is comprised of representatives of various committees, task forces and sectors of the Chamber's membership in an effort to ensure all types, sizes and business interests are involved in the public policy process.

The Chamber's Board of Directors adopted the agenda in November 2008, empowering the Public Policy Committee and Chamber staff to communicate these priority issues to local, state and federal officials.

One of the key ways the Chamber focuses on its Federal Agenda is through the annual DC Fly-In a 2 ½ day trip to Washington, D.C. each spring to meet with congressional members and discuss federal legislative priorities.

## 2009 Federal Legislative Agenda

### Energy and the Environment

- A comprehensive energy policy to reduce the country's dependency on foreign oil, to encourage nuclear power funding and development, reduce impacts on global warming, allow exploration of off-shore drilling as well as to explore the development of renewable energy resources

### Funding Data Needs

- Funding of federal statistical programs that provide estimates of the population, demographic trends, employment and labor data, and other economic data

### Healthcare

- Legislation establishing small business health plans to allow small businesses to pool risk and access coverage
- Adoption of information technologies to establish electronic medical records, decision support mechanisms and claims processing

### Hospitality/Tourism

- Extension of the H2B visa program
- Efforts to increase convention and meeting attendance and air travel

### Infrastructure

- A national broadband policy
- A comprehensive federal infrastructure and transportation plan that includes all modes of transportation including air, rail, roads and water
- Expansion of the Port of Charleston
- Funding for a feasibility study for harbor deepening

### Military Base Retention/Expansion

- FAA funding to extend the runways at Charleston International Airport/Charleston Air Force Base
- The location of Africa Command headquarters on the Naval Weapons Station Charleston
- Support the creation of Joint Base Charleston as one of 12 joint base initiatives under the Department of Defense, under the direction of a flag officer
- The expansion of Red Bank Road to serve the Naval Weapons Station Charleston, Nuclear Power Training Command and Nuclear Power Training School and the Navy Health Clinic

### Workforce Development

- Protection of secret ballot elections and projection of worker rights
- Support of right-to-work legislation
- Comprehensive immigration reform
- Funding for Smaller Learning Communities Program

