

## Tech Titans 2017 Legislative Agenda

Tech Titans is the largest trade association of technology companies in the State of Texas. Our members employ over 250,000 Texans. We believe that a passionate pursuit of technology creates the innovation and productivity that benefits the lives of Texans today and tomorrow.

### Economic Development

Texas has used the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Research & Development Tax Credit, and other tools to attract and retain technology companies, and to grow high-paying tech jobs and tech investment in Texas. Such incentives are required to remain competitive with other states and countries who are seeking these same outcomes.

Recommendations:

- Continue the Texas Enterprise Fund and appropriate additional revenues to the fund to keep Texas competitive with other states.
- Continue the Research & Development Tax Credit.
- Support diversity in the workforce and avoid negative impacts on economic growth, capital investment and tourism in Texas by opposing laws that discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) Texans.
- Oppose property tax policies that place additional burdens on businesses, including appraisal rates or revenue cap structures that treat industrial and residential properties differently. The burden of property tax should be equitably distributed among all taxpayers.

### Public Education

Our Texas economy is highly dependent on the production of well-educated students with rigorous high school curriculum for the benefit of all industries. Public education programs that focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are critical to increasing the pipeline of talented students who will pursue careers in technology, and teachers who will teach them.

Recommendations:

- Increase public education funding beyond "minimum constitutional standards" and support policies that ensure strong accountability standards.
- Provide adequate funding for STEM education programs such as T-STEM academies and U-TEACH, and add funding for the proliferation of P-TECH academies.

### Higher Education

Texas universities and community colleges educate students and build their skills in industries that are critical to sustaining Texas economic prosperity. The continued success of Texas high-tech industries depends on an educated workforce that is prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and on the prevalence of Tier One research universities that work with industry.

Recommendations:

- Increase funding for the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) to match and leverage private donations for research at the state's emerging research institutions.
- Continue and amend the Governor's University Research Initiative (GURI) fund by allowing for recruitment of emerging researchers, not just Nobel Laureates and members of the national academies, and require industry support for the recruitment of these researchers to ensure commercialization outcomes.
- Support the Engineering for Life initiative at UT Dallas, which performs groundbreaking research on new, revolutionary medical devices and translates high-impact research into job creation and economic growth.

### Workforce Development

The skills gap is a very real thing in Texas. Only 35% of our adult workforce has a college degree or work-related certificate, when studies show we need 60% of our adult population with such education and training.

Recommendations:

- Support legislative implementation of the 60x30 plan.
- Support continued funding of the Skills Development Fund.
- Increase career pathway opportunities and attainment by developing and expanding industry-specific certification programs and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses that address the workforce needs of the technology industry.
- Increase K-12 funding and alternative certifications for more math and computer science teachers and courses to support the STEM endorsement.

## **Tech Titans Advocacy Team**

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