



## Richardson Chamber of Commerce 2017 Legislative Agenda

The Richardson Chamber represents more than 900 member organizations and is credited with bringing some of the world's largest corporations to North Texas, and for helping brand Richardson as the Telecom Corridor. The Richardson Chamber has been awarded a 5-star accreditation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; only the top 1 percent of chambers in the U.S. receives this accreditation.

### 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:

- Maintain funding for the Texas Enterprise Fund at a level for Texas to be competitive with other states to attract high-paying jobs and investments.
- Maintain 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 upon the production of well-educated students who have a rigorous high school curriculum, for the benefit of all industries. Public education programs focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are critical to increasing the pipeline of talented students who will pursue careers in technology, and teachers who will teach them.

Recommendations:

- Increase the funding formulas and weights to accurately reflect the actual costs of educating all students so that they can meet the state standards of college and career readiness.
- 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.
- Provide funding for high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten.

### 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 Program.
- Increase K-12 funding for more computer science and math teachers and courses to support the STEM endorsement.

### Higher Education

Texas universities and community colleges are educating students and building their skills in the 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 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 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 insure 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.

### **Transportation**

Recommendations:

- Increase funding for the Texas Department of Transportation to maintain state roads and highways by creating sustainable funding sources.
- Support High-speed rail and the regulatory changes necessary to grant TxDOT legal authority to implement and regulate high-speed rail projects.
- Support continuation of eminent domain authority and related tools to allow planning and development of new and/or expanded transportation corridors including high-speed rail, commuter rail, freight and highways.

### **Local Government**

Recommendations:

- Support local control, where local elected officials are tasked with raising funds and providing services to respond to the individual needs of the Richardson community.

### **Water**

Recommendations:

- Support legislation to accelerate the state permitting process for the development of new water resources in Texas.

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