



DC Chamber of Commerce

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POLICY AGENDA

MESSAGE FROM THE DC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S LEADERSHIP

The mission of the DC Chamber of Commerce is to maximize business opportunities for its members as well as contribute to the fabric of the District of Columbia. The DC Chamber of Commerce encourages and protects our members' ability to do business by championing business friendly policies and addressing impediments to success. We provide leadership on a broad spectrum of legislative and policy issues.

The past year has proven to be a test for many of our members as they work to survive the economic downturn. And over the past year, the Chamber has been able to stave off legislative and regulatory initiatives that could harm our members' ability to operate successfully and help grow our economy, create more jobs, and improve the District's competitiveness regionally.

The Chamber's policy work is essential to our members' success. Last year, we meaningfully connected our members with elected officials and government leaders. As a result, our members advanced an economic agenda to enhance and grow our business community. We believe our policy work has never been more important than this year as elected officials seek to shore up declining revenues by potentially raising taxes and imposing new fees on business. This year, our work will focus on protecting our members as the economy slowly recovers.

The DC Chamber of Commerce firmly believes its policy work is instrumental in improving the climate for our members to do business in Washington, DC.

Sincerely,

Stephen Porter, Chair
Partner
Arnold & Porter

Barbara B. Lang
President & CEO
DC Chamber of Commerce

HISTORY OF THE CHAMBER

The concept of an institution uniquely qualified to represent the interests of business has existed since President Howard Taft, and on June 29, 1938, incorporation papers were filed at City Hall to establish a local chamber of commerce in the nation's capital. The Washington Chamber of Commerce, as it was known then, was originally formed to provide services for African-American businesses. The Washington Chamber of Commerce changed its name to the Negro Chamber of Commerce in August 1946 so that the local chamber name would reflect the unique needs of black businesses at that time. Ten years later, on October 23, 1956, the name was changed to the District of Columbia Chamber of Commerce. With this new name came a new direction and purpose. Not only would the Chamber stimulate the growth of minority businesses, but it would also work for all businesses located in the District.

Today, the Chamber works aggressively to expand the economy in Washington, D.C. by attracting new jobs and creating economic opportunities for our members and citizens. The Chamber also focuses on issues that impact our future growth and community development including arts and culture, education, energy, international trade and government affairs.

As a result of the active membership campaigns over the past years and the implementation of strategic plans, the Chamber has continued to serve the business community for more than 70 years.

ABOUT THE CHAMBER

The DC Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to improving the climate of business in the District of Columbia. Aggressively pursuing and promoting policy issues that are of interest to the entire business community is what makes the DC Chamber of Commerce the premier advocate for business in the District.

Our membership ranks have surged over the past ten years and include businesses that range from small start-up companies to large multi-million dollar corporations and represent the major segments of the District's economy. The DC Chamber's growth stems from tireless efforts to promote and lobby for public policy issues that are of interest to our members.

2010 PUBLIC POLICY THEMES

In 2010, the DC Chamber of Commerce's policy and legislative work will focus on the following themes:

- Promoting entrepreneurial development that will enhance the District's business climate and drive job growth
- Supporting the creation and availability of financing options for small businesses
- Encouraging public policy that expands the District's tax base to minimize the tax burden placed on businesses

investment/capital pools) to support and grow entrepreneurial initiatives

- Work with local universities to encourage the development of entrepreneurial program offerings
- Encourage the development and growth of business incubators

SUPPORTING THE CREATION AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCING OPTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The near collapse of the financial markets has constricted the availability of credit and financing options for small businesses. Without financing, essential for survival, many small businesses face an end to their existence. As an integral part of the local economy, the District of Columbia cannot thrive without the presence of a strong small business community. The Chamber supports the need for the local and federal government to eliminate many of the constraints and regulations which make the city less inviting than surrounding jurisdictions for establishing and growing their businesses in Washington, DC.

The Chamber will

- Support continued funding of DC CAPCO program
- Connect financially struggling small businesses with DC Small Business Investment Companies
- Oppose legislation or regulation that unnecessarily burdens small businesses

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT WILL ENHANCE THE DISTRICT'S BUSINESS CLIMATE AND DRIVE JOB GROWTH

By aggressively encouraging local start-ups, through provision of technical assistance, financial support, direct counseling, entrepreneurial education, and assistance with facilities or space, the Chamber seeks to promote competition in the market and employment of District residents.

The Chamber will

- Work to expand investment capital opportunities (seed capital/angel

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC POLICY THAT EXPANDS THE DISTRICT'S TAX BASE TO MINIMIZE THE TAX BURDEN ON BUSINESSES

In 2007, the DC Chamber of Commerce reported that virtually all of the District's revenue sources are dominated by a small number of big taxpayers. As we have seen, a change in the fortune of those few has had a substantial impact on the city's tax revenue. By growing the number of tax payers, the District can lessen the tax burden borne by the business community as well as cushion itself against unexpected volatility in revenue.

The Chamber will

- Aggressively seek tax parity with Virginia for business based in the District of Columbia
- Encourage workforce development strategies that increase the earning potential of incumbent workers
- Support the creation of workforce housing that increases the number of taxpayers contributing to the District's revenue

SUMMARY OF 2009 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

BILL 18-0001, "QUICK PAYMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"

Purpose of the Bill:

To amend the District of Columbia Quick Payment Amendment Act of 1984 to require the Office of the Chief Financial Officer to be responsible for reporting interest penalties instead of the Chief Procurement Officer.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

This bill became law on October 22, 2009.

BILL 18-0007, "PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"

Purpose of the Bill:

To amend the Procurement Practices Act of 1985 to add definitions of certain terms, establish a new procurement method for reverse auctions, and shorten the 30-day period for public notice by the Office of Contracting Procurement regarding invitations for bids.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

This bill became law on October 22, 2009.

BILL 18-0053, "PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TIMELINES STANDARD ACT OF 2009"

Purpose of the Bill:

To amend Title 34 of the District of Columbia Official Code to institute time limitations on the evidentiary proceedings and issuance of orders by the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0062, "INTERN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Human Rights Act of 1977 to expand the definition of employees to include unpaid interns for the purpose of establishing a right to sue.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status:

This bill became law on March 19, 2010.

BILL 18-0090, "HEALTH OCCUPATIONS REVISION GENERAL AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Health Occupations Revision Act of 1985 to define the Boards of Allied Health and Behavioral Health.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

This bill became law on July 18, 2009.

BILL 18-0093, "NEW E-ECONOMY TRANSFORMATION ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend Title 47 of the District of Columbia Code to extend from 5 years to 10 years the real property tax and other abatements provided to Qualified High Technology Companies that are located in a high technology development zone.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

This bill was referred to the Committee on Finance and Revenue

BILL 18-0098, "SMALL BUSINESS LOAN AUTHORITY ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To authorize the lending of money to and equity investment in the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation by the District.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Economic Development.

BILL 18-0103, "INSURANCE CLAIMS CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Insurance Trade and Economic Development Amendment Act of 2000 to establish a cause of action for insured persons to be made whole when insurers fail to pay proper claims.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0136, "HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EX-OFFENDERS AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Human Rights Act of 1977 to make ex-offenders a protected class and prohibit employers, housing providers, and educational institutions from basing decisions on arrest and conviction records.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber opposed this bill.

Status:

This bill was referred to the Committee on Aging and Community Affairs.

BILL 18-0137, "SUCCESSFUL EX-OFFENDERS RE-ENTRY ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To require the Mayor to develop a comprehensive plan that outlines a strategy for successful re-entry of ex-offenders back into the community in the areas of housing, education, health care, rehabilitation, job-training and employment opportunities.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development.

BILL 18-0153, "COMMERCIAL CURBSIDE LOADING ZONE IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To establish a program for the efficient management and enforcement of commercial loading zones.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill became law on October 22, 2009.

BILL 18-0172, "DC ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INVESTMENT STIMULUS ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To increase the filing threshold amount for unincorporated businesses and adjust it annually for inflation; to lower the real property

tax rate for Class 2 commercial properties; and to lower the corporate and unincorporated business income tax rates.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber supported the bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Finance and Revenue.

BILL 18-0183, "GET DC RESIDENTS TRAINING FOR JOBS NOW ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To require the Mayor to establish evening, weekend and summer adult career technical training for industry certification for District residents at the Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School, at the Academy of Construction and Design at Cardozo Senior High School and at the Hospitality Public Charter School at Roosevelt High School in partnership with existing career technical education programs.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development.

BILL 18-0233, "WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act of 1979 to expand the definition of protected disclosures.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill became law on March 11, 2010.

BILL 18-0239, “UNUSED PHARMACEUTICAL SAFE DISPOSAL ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To ensure the safe, effective, and proper disposal of unused pharmaceuticals in the District of Columbia by requiring the Board of Pharmacy to design a public education campaign to educate individuals on the importance of the proper disposal of pharmaceuticals.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill became law on March 5, 2010.

BILL 18-0240, “PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPENSING PRACTICES REFORM ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the District of Columbia Prescription Drug Pricing Information Act to establish the Orange Book as the generic formulary for the District of Columbia.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill became law on March 11, 2010.

BILL 18-0323, “GIFT CARD PROTECTION ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To prohibit gift certificates and gift cards from expiring or being subject to fees or charges for a period of four years.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0332, “DEPARTMENT OF SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Small, Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act of 2007 to eliminate certain responsibilities from the Commission.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill will become law on April 20, 2010.

BILL 18-0337, “PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To revise the competitive sealed proposal and sole source contracting procedures, authorize exemptions from the competition requirement, and further define the District of Columbia Supply Schedule.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Government Operations and the environment.

BILL 18-0405, “MENU EDUCATION AND LABELING ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To require restaurants, which are part of a chain having 10 or more locations nationally, to provide nutritional information for standard menu items sold.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Health.

BILL 18-0450, “HEALTHCARE EQUALITY REFORM ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To prohibit rate variation in health insurance rate-setting based on the gender or sex of an individual.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0457, “SMALL BUSINESS STABILIZATION AND JOB CREATION STRATEGY ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the Small, Local, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act of 2005 to require the Department to provide stabilization services to Certified Business Enterprises.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber generally supported this bill.

Status:

The bill was enacted on March 25, 2010.

BILL 18-0500, “DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICIAL CODE TITLE 29 (BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS) ENACTMENT ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To create a “Business Organizations” title of the District of Columbia Official Code which will update, streamline, and harmonize the law relating to business corporations, nonprofit corporations, professional corporations, general partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, general cooperative associations, limited cooperative associations, unincorporated nonprofit associations, and statutory trusts, to provide for mergers, interest

exchanges, conversions, and domestications.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber testified about this bill’s potential impact on businesses and made several recommendations.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0516, “FINANCIAL PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To amend the District of Columbia Confirmation Act of 1978 to clarify the process for confirming subordinate agency heads and change the time limit for review of nominees for certain boards and commissions.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Public Services and Consumer Affairs.

BILL 18-0521, “HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT OF 2009”**Purpose of the Bill:**

To prohibit the manufacture and sale of products containing bisphenol-A, phthalates, propoxur, permethrin, atrazine, and synthetic exfoliants.

Chamber’s Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Finance and Revenue.

BILL 18-0522, "POPLAR POINT BUSINESS INCENTIVE ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To provide for tax exemptions for the Poplar Point Business Corridor.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Finance and Revenue.

BILL 18-0545, "KEEP D.C. WORKING ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To establish partial unemployment compensation and provide employers with an alternative to layoffs by establishing a voluntary program that would enable an employer to reduce employee hours and have the employees receive unemployment compensation corresponding to the reduction in hours.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development.

BILL 18-0553, "DC COMPETITIVENESS ACT OF 2009"**Purpose of the Bill:**

To mandate that funds received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, (ARRA) be used for technology-based economic development projects that will create a 21st Century workforce and economy in the District of Columbia.

Chamber's Position:

The Chamber did not take a position on this bill.

Status:

The bill was referred to the Committee on Economic Development

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