

2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



PUBLIC POLICY
Council

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GREATER KILLEEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P. O. Box 548

Killeen, Texas 76540-0548

www.killeenchamber.com



where freedom grows

2019 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Public Policy Council will have the authority to establish positions and act on legislative issues as outlined in the legislative agenda and as long as they are consistent with these Guiding Principles. If an issue arises, that does not meet these criteria, the Chamber's Executive Committee can review and approve any issues or recommendation arising in the event action must be taken prior to the next scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

GKCC supports the free-enterprise system.

GKCC supports and will promote the continued development of the region's key economic sectors including Fort Hood, military and defense, health care, hospitality, manufacturing, real estate, construction, knowledge-based and service industries.

GKCC supports a comprehensively planned, constructed, and well-maintained infrastructure as a key to long-term economic development.

GKCC will support collaborative, cost-effective solutions to regional infrastructure challenges.

GKCC will encourage that business-minded individuals, knowledgeable of the community's needs, be elected to office and we will encourage business-minded citizens to volunteer for community service.

GKCC will support economic development initiatives which enhance the competitiveness of new and existing businesses.

GKCC will support equity in tax and fee structures, regulations and administrative procedures that produce positive economic growth in the region.

GKCC will support a public education system, working in partnership with the business community, to prepare all students to be successful in the workplace or in post-secondary education.

GKCC will support creative and adequate funding methods to ensure that our region's public-school systems and institutions of higher learning can remain effective in their quest for excellence.

GKCC will support high quality, cost-effective government services offered in a manner conducive to the growth of competitive businesses.

GKCC will support the privatization and consolidation of services throughout the region when these actions are in the best interest of the public.

GKCC will support reasonable actions that protect and conserve the environment.

GKCC will support market-based changes to the health care system to produce competitiveness without sacrificing quality of care.

GKCC will support equal opportunity for all citizens of the region.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

GENERAL COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- We support the notion that the best decision is made closest to the point where the decision is implemented. Therefore, we will support retaining local control.
- We oppose unfunded mandates.
- We oppose caps on ad valorem appraisals/collections.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- So that we can reach our full economic potential, we support:
 - equitable, reliable, and predictable sources of funding for higher education; and,
 - consistent formula appropriations to fund student enrollment growth and inflation to support the growth and development of both public community colleges and universities.
- We support an increase in non-formula support, a critical source of base funding, to improve student access. For example, TAMU-Central Texas lost 32% of its Transition Funding that was originally allocated to support the building and development of this new university and its previously unserved population.
- We support expanding the size and scope of the Small Institution Supplement especially for newly created institutions that are unable to achieve financial stability with formula-only funding.
- We support incentives for advancing the collaborative, cost effective model for higher education being developed by Central Texas College, a public community college, and Texas A&M University Central Texas, a public, upper-level university.
- We support incentives for technology deployment and the delivery of quality distance learning as a meaningful strategy to assure access and affordability for higher education.
- We support incentives that reward the creation of meaningful tuition guarantees and tuition caps to reduce and control the cost of public higher education.
- We support meaningful adjustment of the Hazlewood provisions for veterans to reduce the rapidly escalating financial impact on the State's public colleges and universities, while insuring the sustainability of the original intent of the Hazlewood legislation.
- We believe that outcome-based funding should be implemented gradually as an incentive.
- We support collaborative approaches among Texas' higher education institutions in research and development funding strategies, technology deployment and distance education in order to avoid duplication and waste and create an affordable environment.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- We support incentives that reward the collaboration of high schools with community colleges and universities to expand dual credit opportunities, including the creation of Early College High Schools and the promotion of other dual credit programmatic opportunities.
- We support legislation which improves the school finance system to ensure all students receive an adequate and equitable education.
- We support legislation to provide incentives to encourage business participation in education and workforce development initiatives.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

PUBLIC EDUCATION (CONT)

- We support the reduction of time and resources spent on high-stakes testing and de-emphasizing the utilization of standardized testing as the primary means for measuring student achievement, educator effectiveness or school performance.
- We oppose an Academic Accountability System which arbitrarily ranks schools using letter grades A – F, and which is respectively correlated to student poverty rates for each school.
- We support the funding of full-day Pre-K programs for all school districts for eligible students.
- We support changes to TEC Section 11.1542 that will allow districts the opportunity to sell or lease district property, without restrictions, to other entities such as non-profits, governmental entities, or for-profit companies where the exchange could be more advantageous to districts.
- We support the addition of provisions that allow an entity participating in TRS-ActiveCare to opt out of the program.
- We support an increase in the state’s contribution for school employee health insurance.
- We support increased funding for on-line curriculum and on-line testing.
- We support teacher advancement initiatives such as differentiated pay to help alleviate the shortage of math and science teachers.
- We support measures that give school districts the flexibility to meet the needs of their students. We support “at will” employment for teachers and the removal of the state from setting the terms and conditions of employment.
- We oppose the privatization of public education by means of vouchers, scholarships, tax credits or education saving grants which would defund public schools without the same degree of accountability to which public schools are held.

WORKFORCE

- We support career and technology education in conjunction with public schools and community colleges, where appropriate, to meet the needs of Texas employers.
- We support increased funding for the Skills Development Program administered by the Texas Workforce Commission.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- We support the continuation of the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Texas Enterprise Zone Fund and the tax incentives available under the Texas Economic Development Act under Chapter 312 and 313 of the Tax Code on the provision that the following requirements be added on each project for which funding is considered or awarded: a written application, an economic impact analysis and a written performance agreement.
- We support the Research and Development Tax Credit.

MILITARY SUPPORT

- We support the continued funding for the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) program at the \$30 million level or higher.
- We support licensing reciprocity for those transitioning out of the military and military family members.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

TAXATION

- We support state-funded reimbursements for all political subdivisions that are disproportionately affected by the 100% disabled veterans homestead exemption.
- Lawmakers should consider all alternatives for investing a portion of the Rainy Day Fund to create a new revenue streams to address such needs as: funding pension obligations; reducing debt; growing infrastructure; and increasing funding for education.

ENERGY

- We support healthy economic growth in Texas by promoting the production of adequate supplies of all forms of energy at competitive prices.
- We support legislation that requires all renewable energy project developers to notify the Department of Defense and local installations of their intent before any development is initiated.
- We oppose any Renewable Energy projects (Wind, Solar, etc.) that negatively impact any military installation's capabilities or military fixed-winged and rotary-wing training and operations capabilities, including areas adjacent to military installations, or that negatively impact any military aviation training areas and military aviation training routes.
- We oppose increased taxes and fees on energy sources with the exception of fees that will be dedicated to regulatory programs that will improve the oversight and approval of energy development projects.
- We encourage the conservation of resources.
- We oppose the use of subsidies that distort market economics.

HEALTH CARE

- We support the reliance on market forces to correct the major cost and quality deficiencies in the U.S. health care system.
- We support market driven health care policies that allow for the continuation of employer-sponsored voluntary health care coverage.
- We support legislation to promote consumer-directed health care models in which consumers determine the level and types of coverage they purchase.
- We support legislation that empowers employees and consumers with information regarding the cost and quality of health care services to allow consumers to make informed purchasing decisions.
- We support legislation to allow Texans to purchase health insurance across state lines.
- We support the expansion of telemedicine.
- We oppose additional mandates on employers providing health care.
- We oppose government mandated price controls for medical products, health care provider services and health insurance.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

- We support legislation that would reduce, or eliminate, penalties imposed on local governments as a result of environmental events caused by the actions of an individual or business not related to, or working for, the government.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (CONT)

- We support Texas law that requires environmental agencies to estimate the cost and net benefits to regulated entities before adopting any major proposed rule.
- We support efforts to coordinate to ensure that endangered species regulatory decisions are based on valid scientific evidence and that the interests of Texas taxpayers and businesses are represented before federal decision makers.
- We support incentives for the development and demonstration of new energy or pollution reduction technologies that do not distort the market place.
- We support legislation to streamline the permitting process.
- We support legislation that affirms the rights and powers of state government and limits intrusion by federal agencies in the state's implementation of delegated environmental programs.
- We oppose legislation that places additional requirements on business and industry without a firm technical basis or appreciable benefit to the environment.
- We oppose arbitrary emission limits established in statute that do not provide flexibility for site-specific conditions and the future development of technology control.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- We support legislation that allows landlords protection against liability solely for renting or leasing to someone with a criminal record, unless the landlord knew the conviction was for a violent or sexually violent offense.
- We support legislation to downgrade first-time minor drug possession offenses and allow courts to divert individuals to a treatment program when the offender is deemed by the court not to be a threat to public safety.

EMPLOYMENT

- We support pay equity.
- We support Texas' status as a Right-to-Work state.
- We support zero tolerance for the presence of alcohol or illegal drugs on the job.
- We support transferring control over federally mandated programs like unemployment insurance to states.
- We support legislation that provides that a claimant who fails, or refuses to submit to, an employer required drug test that is a condition of the job offer or refuses the offer of work, without good cause, would disqualify the claimant from receiving unemployment benefits.
- We oppose union dues check off.
- We oppose increases in the minimum wage.
- We oppose efforts dictating how private employers' interview and hire candidates for employment.
- We support equal treatment of the public workforce with respect to the formation of employee associations.
- We oppose the political involvement of public employee associations in political subdivisions in which they are employed.

2019 STATE PRIORITIES

GENERAL BUSINESS

- We oppose taxation of access to the Internet.
- We oppose regulation of the Internet.
- We oppose legislation that infringes on a company's right to do business anywhere they deem desirable.
- We oppose legislation that infringes on a company's right to outsource resources.

TRANSPORTATION

- We support the expansion of the Interstate 14 Corridor as proposed in the *I-14 Expansion and Improvement Act of 2018*.
- We support the continuation of local pass-thru financing.
- We support the construction of toll roads where there are other transportation options available to users.
- We support outsourcing the state's engineering and construction work to the maximum extent feasible.

WATER

- We support incentives to local and regional water providers to pursue water supply and balanced conservation strategies.
- We support efforts to streamline the process to construct new reservoirs.
- We support efforts to ensure that water providers are able to charge rates for retail water use that balances the need to recover the cost of water and the infrastructure to deliver water.

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

- We support efforts to increase the supply of a skilled workforce for the cybersecurity sector, including programs that effectively transition veterans into this sector.
- We support efforts to build efficient and effective bandwidth in order to accommodate our growing population and help us remain economically competitive.
- We support investments in world-class research to spur groundbreaking innovation, including the Governor's University Research Initiative.
- We support the promotion of, and leveraging of, partnerships between private industry and academia to bridge the gap between campuses and markets.
- We support maintaining the Research & Development Tax Credit.

2019 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

GENERAL COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- We support the notion that the best decision is made closest to the point where the decision is implemented. Therefore, we support retaining local control.
- We support a balanced budget.

EDUCATION

- We support implementation of the Credentialing Assistance Program for Soldiers to attain professional and technical civilian credentials and certifications.
- We support continued and/or enhanced Impact Aid Funding for school districts.
- We oppose the redirection/reallocation of Impact Aid Funding for the purpose of creating an Education Savings Account (ESA) program or for the purpose of promoting the privatization of public education.
- We support the restoration of tuition assistance funding to 24 Semester Credit Hours.
- We support the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act especially as it relates to student financial aid.
- We oppose proposals to rank colleges and universities to determine aid distribution.

DEFENSE

- We support authorization of a Base Realignment and Closure round to save funds and improve efficiency of military installations.
- We support repeal of that portion of the 2011 Budget Control Act that created sequestration.
- We support working with the Department of the Army to develop strategic plans to reduce Army spending.

TRANSPORTATION

- We support the expansion of the Interstate 14 Corridor as outlined in the *I-14 expansion and Improvement Act of 2018* and the future expansion of the corridor across the states of Alabama and Georgia. We also support the addition of those sections built to interstate standards to the Federal Interstate Highway System.
- We support the return of more federal gasoline tax revenue generated in Texas to Texas.

WATER

- We oppose Section 2014 of S. 601 in the Water Resources Development Act which gives the Army Corps of Engineers unprecedented discretion to adjust reservoir operations without Congressional authorization.
- We oppose rules that would broaden the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency and US Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act to include “other waters” located in isolated places in a landscape as “Waters of the U.S.” without requiring case-specific evaluation.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- We support the continued funding of the SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant Program within FEMA.

2019 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

PUBLIC SAFETY (CONT)

- We support adding criteria to the SAFER Grant formula that would account for impacts of military installations on emergency services.
- We support the continued funding of the COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) Grant Program within the U.S. Department of Justice.
- We support adding criteria to the COPS Grant formula that would account for impacts of military installations on local law enforcement operations.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- We support maintaining or enhancing the funding of the Community Development Block Grant Program in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

ENERGY

- We support the production of adequate supplies of all forms of energy at competitive prices.
- We support the conservation of resources.
- We oppose the use of subsidies that distort market economics.
- We oppose increased taxes and fees on energy sources with the exception of fees that will be dedicated to regulatory programs that will improve the oversight and approval of energy development projects.

HEALTH CARE

- We support the reliance on market forces to correct the major cost and quality deficiencies in the U.S. health care system.
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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- We support legislation that would reduce, or eliminate, penalties imposed on local governments as a result of environmental events caused by the actions of an individual or business not related to, or working for, the government.
- We support federal law that requires environmental agencies to estimate the cost and net benefits to regulated entities before adopting any major proposed rule.
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2019 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (CONT)

- We support incentives for the development and demonstration of new energy or pollution reduction technologies that do not distort the market place.
- We support legislation to streamline the permitting process.
- We support legislation that affirms the rights and powers of state government and limits intrusion by federal agencies in the state's implementation of delegated environment programs.
- We oppose legislation that places additional requirements on business and industry without a firm technical basis or appreciable benefit to the environment.
- We oppose arbitrary emission limits established in statute that do not provide flexibility for site-specific conditions and the future development of technology control.

EMPLOYMENT

- We support pay equity.
- We oppose increases in the minimum wage.
- We oppose union dues check off.

BUSINESS

- We oppose taxation of access to the Internet.
- We oppose regulation of the Internet.
- We oppose legislation that infringes on a company's right to do business anywhere they deem desirable.

IMMIGRATION

- We support legal immigration.

HOMELAND SECURITY

- We support a secure border.



Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

John Crutchfield, President/CEO
Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 548, Killeen 76540
Killeenchamber.com
(254) 526-9551
John@KilleenChamber.com

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