



**S T A T E**

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**

With the local unemployment rate at 3 percent, more than ten thousand jobs are unfilled in the Upstate during any given month. We must invest in education - from kindergarten to college - and look at innovative ways to expand our workforce.

- Teacher Pay: The Upstate Chamber Coalition urges the General Assembly to increase teacher pay above the Southeastern average by 2021-2022.
- Freedom for Education Schools: The Commission on Higher Education needs to give our state's four year universities the flexibility to innovate teacher education to meet the demands of the teacher shortage.
- Technical College Pay: As we lean on our technical colleges to keep up with our workforce demands, the General Assembly needs to fund increased salaries for technical college professors and instructors.
- Workforce Housing: We support the passage of legislation that allows new, market-based avenues so local builders and developers can build critical housing for our workforce.
- Professional Licensing: The General Assembly needs to immediately give the 2,800 young adults legally living in the Upstate under the DACA program the right to receive state licenses to work.

**PENSION CRISIS**

Our state's unfunded public pension liability is a fiscal crisis that will dramatically increase costs for the business community and decrease our competitiveness.

- The General Assembly needs to finish reforming the system by closing the state pension system to new employees and switching to a defined contribution plan.
- Government subdivisions should be allowed to leave the system so they may pay more competitive salaries.
- Any changes must preserve the promises made to those currently in the system.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

We scored a major victory in 2017 with the passage of the comprehensive infrastructure funding legislation. While we continue the implementation of that road funding plan, we need to turn our attention to the other critical facets of infrastructure that power our economy.

- Mass Transit: Transit is not a social service, it is an economic development and business retention imperative. If our state is going to attract headquarter companies, and compete with larger metropolitan areas, it is critical that the General Assembly begin increasing state support for mass transit in our metro areas.
- Commercial Aviation: The General Assembly needs to dedicate a stream of funding – such as the tax on rental cars – to our commercial airports so they can expand passenger and cargo service and boost our economy.

**TAXES AND REGULATION**

Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce and the Upstate Chamber Coalition will work at the state and local levels to cut red tape for small business, make our region more economically competitive, and lower the barriers to entry for local entrepreneurs.

- Tax Reform: We have long supported efforts at comprehensive tax reform in South Carolina. The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports efforts to make our state tax code more fair, equitable, and competitive for business.
- Angel Investor Tax Credit Expansion: The General Assembly needs to immediately reauthorize the successful Angel Investor Tax Credit program that encourages South Carolinians to fund our own high-impact start-up companies.
- Regulatory Reform: New regulations should require a public economic impact - not simply a state fiscal impact. Regulations above a certain economic impact should have public disclosure and a waiting period before being approved by the General Assembly.
- Overturn "Plaintiff Chooses": The General Assembly needs to re-institute the "joint and several" protections in court cases involving multiple parties. We should ensure that businesses with a small impact on an injury do not shoulder 100% of the financial burden because they have deep pockets.

**ENERGY**

The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports the orderly sale of Santee Cooper - or consider other solutions - to protect wholesale, retail, and industrial ratepayers, as well as provide continuous economic development support across the state.



## FEDERAL

**TRADE**

International trade powers the Upstate's economy. The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports trade deals that will expand our access to international trade and open markets for Upstate goods.

- The Upstate Chamber Coalition opposes the "national security" tariffs levied on our nation's allies.
- The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports restoring the Export-Import Bank's ability to finance major projects and urge the President to nominate, and Congress to confirm, nominees who support the Bank.
- We support a fully-funded and staffed U.S. Commercial Service, which levels the playing field overseas for U.S. companies and attracts foreign investment into our country.

**REGULATORY CLIMATE**

Burdensome federal regulations cost our economy more than \$2 trillion each year - or about a quarter of a million dollars to the average American company.

- The Upstate Chamber Coalition supports the ongoing administrative review of, and the reduction or elimination of, burdensome federal regulations.
- We also strongly support Senator Tim Scott's efforts to require immediate stays on regulations with a major economic impact pending judicial review.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Our nation's crumbling infrastructure is both a drag on economic growth and an opportunity to transform our economy.

- We support the bipartisan calls for increased and long-term funding legislation to repair our crumbling infrastructure.
- We support the continued funding of the Charleston Port deepening project.

**IMMIGRATION**

Legal immigration is directly tied to economic growth. Immigration brings a disproportionate number of entrepreneurs into our economy and brings in young workers to offset the retiring population of Baby Boomers. We urge Congress to work on common sense immigration reform that addresses the long-term needs of the American economy.

- We ask Congress and the Trump Administration to expand legal immigration by reforming and expanding skilled worker programs such as the H-1B and L-1 visas.
- Congress needs to take immediate action to give DACA recipients legal status so they remain in the United States.

## SPARTANBURG

**FAIRNESS IN FUNDING**

Five tourism areas are eligible for millions of dollars in state aid, known as the Destination-Specific Tourism Marketing Grant because they have private-sector funds to match with the state funds. These DMO's include: Myrtle Beach, Charleston, Hilton Head, Greenville, and Columbia. Spartanburg now has dedicated private-sector funds which are projected to meet the threshold to qualify for the larger pool of state grants by December 2019. Fairness in funding is essential in order for SC collectively to compete.

- We support changing the threshold and funding formula of those entities that can apply for Destination Specific Tourism Marketing Grants to include Spartanburg County and other areas that can raise at least \$500,000 in private-sector funds.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATE "WHITE-COLLAR" INCENTIVES**

Spartanburg has launched a comprehensive corporate development strategy to grow and diversify our economy by positioning Spartanburg County to attract and retain higher-wage jobs. The plan identifies target audience opportunities and actions to increase the competitiveness and marketability of Spartanburg County as a premier destination for corporate-related business.

- Given our state's lagging per capita income, we encourage the General Assembly to support incentives and opportunities that assist in attracting higher wage jobs to South Carolina

\*Pending Executive Board Approval on December 10, 2018.