



Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce 2011 Legislative Priorities

STATE GOVERNMENT BUDGET & FINANCES

While state revenues are showing some improvement, budget estimates continue to show that the legislature and governor will have to deal with an estimated revenue and expenditure gap of nearly \$1 billion. An important component of a good business climate is to have sound fiscal management. We therefore strongly support a cut in state spending of at least 15% as the beginning point for reducing state expenditures.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TAX CREDIT

Research is a key component of a company's ability to remain competitive. Maintaining this tax credit that provides incentive for research activities to occur in Iowa is a critical economic development strategy. It has proven to be very effective in generating and retaining high paying technical positions in innovative companies throughout Iowa. We support the continuation of this tax credit.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

If Iowa's economy is to grow we must preserve our business foundation. We continue to:

- Support Right-to-work
- Oppose employee choice of doctor
- Oppose prevailing wage
- Oppose open-scope bargaining
- Oppose increasing health insurance coverage mandates

PROPERTY TAX

We support comprehensive property tax reform that provides tax relief for commercial and industrial properties. According to the latest "50-State Property Tax Comparison Study," Iowa's urban commercial property tax rates have moved up from 5th highest in the nation in 2006 to 2nd highest in 2008, with the rural commercial property tax rates currently ranked 7th highest.

The study shows that industrial property does not rank much better – 8th for urban industrial property and 15th for rural. In a survey of Marshalltown Chamber members, 67% of the respondents rated the reduction of commercial/industrial taxes as very important.

WORKFORCE

We support the continuation of job training incentives as an important tool in providing the skills necessary for our workforce to have the skills required by today's competitive global environment.

TRANSPORTATION

Highway infrastructure is essential to Iowa's ability to grow its economy. It has been well documented that costs to maintain and expand our highway system, roads and streets have increased significantly, while at the same time gas tax revenues have decreased. Because current revenues are not sufficient to meet highway infrastructure needs, we support the need to make sure all revenues intended for highways are used for that purpose, and we support the need to increase revenue from the gas tax and/or other alternatives to meet the demand of the highway system.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We support the restructuring of the economic development effort in Iowa to a public/private partnership. This model will help to renew the focus on economic growth and business development. Utilizing a broad range of expertise from the public and private sectors, the state of Iowa can become more responsive to the demands of the global economic environment. The infusion of a business model such as this provides a better path to job creation.

EDUCATION

The quality of our education system is critical to our ability to have a workforce that is capable of sustaining and growing our businesses in a very competitive global environment. As a state and community, we invest a significant portion of our tax dollars into the education system. With stagnant or declining student performance, it is essential that we do what is necessary to improve educational performance.

To that end we support:

- Establishing state-level 21st Century learning standards that meet or exceed federal standards as well as assessments focused on student achievement.
- Increasing utilization of flexible and innovative school reform models such as charter schools.
- Increasing focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics

- Improving and enhancing existing technology tools to better connect the workforce needs of business to school curriculums and students assessment of future career pathways.
- Implementing initiatives to improve graduation rates.
- Adoption of a plan that lengthens either the school day or the school year, and moves to the implementation of a year-round school calendar.
- Building stronger connections between the PreK-12 education system and the business community.

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