

Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY REFORM

In order to effectively meet the needs and concerns of Virginia's businesses and residents, government must operate with a business-minded focus on efficiency, responsiveness and strategic vision that enables government to adjust to rapidly changing economic and political landscapes. To this end, the Loudoun County Chamber supports a regulatory regime at the federal, state and local levels that emphasizes the importance of strong economic growth, while ensuring rules are cost effective and based on valid scientific and technical data. The Chamber asserts that all levels of government should conduct reliable cost-benefit analyses of all proposed regulations and provide a detailed annual accounting of the costs and benefits of those regulations. The Chamber believes the following policies will help enable a more stable, consistent, business-friendly, and business-focused environment.

Stakeholder Input and Review:

The Chamber strongly advocates that the business community have a central role in the discussion and development of any proposed new or amended law, policy, regulation or other type of local, state or federal government-imposed rule that would impact the cost, operations or growth of business in Virginia.

Privatization:

The Chamber supports efforts to examine the role of all levels of government in providing goods and services in order to determine those which might be provided more efficiently, effectively, and economically in and by the private sector and non-profit organizations, particularly in the areas where services beyond the core functions of government are being provided by government.

Property Tax Assessments:

The Chamber supports establishing and maintaining a fair, transparent and balanced process for determining real estate tax assessments and for taxpayers aggrieved by locally assessed real estate valuations to appeal those assessments.

Property Rights:

The Chamber believes that government laws, regulations and policies should not unnecessarily restrict

private property rights, and believes that private property owners should be justly compensated for any reductions in the value of their property caused by government actions.

Best Value Contracts:

The Chamber supports policy reform that provides public bodies with a more time-efficient and value-driven procedure within the competitive negotiation process for professional services.

Easements:

The Chamber supports a reasonable process for facilitating the building of infrastructure through developing properties by providing adjoining properties access and/or connections. The Chamber also supports efforts to reform Virginia Code § 15.2-1800 to eliminate the public hearing requirement for localities that convey certain site development easements, such as utility easements, across public property as part of infrastructure projects in a locality's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Unfunded Mandates and Policies:

The Chamber opposes the imposition of unfunded mandates or policy positions, particularly those that would require Virginia's or Loudoun County's businesses and other taxpayers to fund the long-term costs of these mandates. To this end, the Chamber supports transparency and the disclosure in the State, Loudoun County Government and Loudoun County Public Schools' budgets of the cost to businesses and taxpayers of all unfunded mandates imposed by the state and federal governments so that the businesses and taxpayers may understand the costs and benefits of those mandates.

Constitution and Statutory Authority:

The Chamber strongly supports the rule of law as a condition for thriving business and economic health. The Chamber opposes administrative overreach by any branch of government that goes beyond the application of statute and the Constitution in a manner that negatively impacts businesses.

The Chamber believes that all levels of government should conduct regular periodic cost impact reviews of all regulations and ordinances to assess the continued relevancy and efficacy of these regulations, with a particular emphasis on eliminating those that unnecessarily hinder job and economic growth.

Initiative and Referendum:

The Chamber opposes any amendment to the Virginia Constitution to incorporate initiative and referendum procedures that bypass the legislature.

Ethics Reform:

The Chamber strongly supports a legal and regulatory framework that requires and clearly defines the highest standards of ethical behavior and accountability for all government officials – whether elected or appointed - and at all levels of government.

While steps have been taken toward reform, the Chamber continues to support the following:

- Continued statutory ethics reform for the executive branch;
- Banning the use of campaign funds for personal expenses; and
- Banning use of public funds by any officer, agent or employee of any government entity for purposes unrelated to the duties of his or her office without lawful authorization.

Non-partisan Redistricting:

The Chamber supports implementation of a non-partisan redistricting process in Virginia. Hallmarks of such a process should include: a detailed process for the selection of a non-partisan commission consisting of no fewer than seven members; the absence of the use of political data or election results in the commission’s process; openness of the process to public scrutiny; and ultimate accountability to the electorate through legislative approval by way of an up or down vote of commission recommendations.

As a step toward improving the way election districts are drawn in the Commonwealth, the Chamber supports consideration of common-sense criteria as part of the existing process, including the following:

- Respect the existing boundaries of cities, counties and towns.
- Respect the requirements outlined in the state Constitution.
- Ensure, to the extent possible, districts are compact and contiguous.
- Keep communities and neighborhoods together.
- Draw districts without the intent to benefit one political party over another.
- Draw districts without targeting individuals.

Two-Term Governor:

In order to foster greater stability and continuity in state government operations, the Chamber strongly

advocates that the General Assembly approve a Constitutional amendment to allow Virginia's future Governors to seek a second consecutive term.

Staggered Terms:

It remains the position of the Chamber that staggered terms for the Board of Supervisors and School Board would be in the best long-term interests of Loudoun County.