



LOUDOUN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## 2020 Public Policy Positions

*(Approved 10.23.19)*

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### PREAMBLE

On behalf of our more than 1,200 members and the Loudoun community we serve, the Loudoun Chamber will advocate for public policy solutions that will lead to a world class quality of life in Loudoun County.

The Chamber's policy positions are based on the following principles, which are necessary to ensure a healthy business climate and a strong community here in Loudoun, and will support the overall success of our member organizations:

- Federal, state and local laws, regulations and tax policies must support a strong, pro-business environment that ensures economic competitiveness and protects the ability of businesses to create jobs and economic opportunity;

- The Chamber is committed to partnering with like-minded organizations to advocate for the issues and policies that serve the interests of Loudoun’s businesses and community;
- Federal, state and local governments must provide adequate investment in vital assets, such as transportation, technology, energy, water, K-12 education, higher education and workforce development, to meet the needs of a growing economy and population;
- More of the tax revenues generated by Loudoun’s businesses and citizens should remain in Loudoun to serve the needs of our businesses and citizens;
- Federal, state and local government must be responsive to the needs of the citizens and businesses, and accountable for the funds entrusted to their stewardship; and
- Loudoun County's business and nonprofit community must have the opportunity to work with government officials at the federal, state and local levels to develop and implement legislative and regulatory policies that will impact the economy and quality of life in our community.

The following outlines the Chamber’s specific public policy positions on the priority issues of its members.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Chamber supports efforts to continue to make Loudoun County, including the incorporated towns within its boundaries, highly competitive in the global marketplace through aggressively promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and by creating an environment that is conducive to the formation and attraction of new ones. Loudoun County has made great strides to becoming a “business-friendly” success story, and it is imperative that a predictable, customer-focused approach be the foundation of how our government operates to build on the County’s success.

### **Economic Development Investment:**

The Chamber supports increased public and private economic development efforts focused on encouraging business growth and attraction, particularly in targeted sectors, to help grow the County’s commercial tax base and lessen the burden on residential taxpayers. Collaboration between the

economic development efforts of the County and the towns within Loudoun is also important to fully leverage our community's economic potential.

The Chamber supports the Board of Supervisors' continued investment into the County's economic development strategy. As part of that strategy, the Chamber believes the County should continue to invest the financial and personnel resources needed to support an aggressive and comprehensive national and international outreach program that leverages the County's strongest economic assets.

**Rural Economic Development:**

The Chamber recognizes that rural business development is essential to the fiscal health of Loudoun County and contributes to the unique character of our community and our economy. Loudoun County receives a myriad of economic benefits from its rural economy in the form of agricultural products attracting businesses, residents and tourists. The Chamber supports full implementation of the County's Rural Economy Business Development Strategy which supports the continued growth and development of Loudoun's rural economy.

The Chamber strongly supports land use and zoning regulations that allow for a robust and innovative agricultural and rural economy that keeps Loudoun's farms and rural businesses viable and productive. We encourage a view of regulation of agribusiness that meets its particular needs for success, including flexibility for use of property for multiple purposes. These rural uses should be accomplished with respect for the historic sites and rural road network in western Loudoun that draws businesses, residents as well as tourists, agritourists and outdoor recreationists.

The Chamber recognizes the continued support of the Rural Economic Development Council and values this organization's role to shape rural economic development policy.

**Economic Incentives:**

The Chamber supports the strategic and limited use of economic incentives, including tax incentives, by the Commonwealth and local governments in the effort to attract and retain commercial investment. The Chamber acknowledges and endorses current practices on the part of Loudoun County and the Commonwealth to ensure results and accountability with respect to incentive programs.

The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to continue to invest in business incentive programs that recognize the unique needs and challenges faced in northern Virginia, thus encouraging dynamic and growing businesses to invest in Loudoun County. To help create an environment in which Loudoun County can attract and retain top quality companies, priority should be given to reviewing the qualification criteria for Virginia's business incentive programs to ensure Loudoun can qualify for and benefit from these programs.

**Regional Economic Funds:**

The Chamber also supports continued and increased funding and an efficient process for award and disbursement of those funds from the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, the Agricultural and Forestry Industries Development Fund and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) programs. The Chamber urges that this funding include a focus on company retention and recruitment that can be utilized in northern Virginia and recognize the importance of attracting high wage jobs in a way that is commensurate with its current focus on net number of jobs created.

**Go Virginia:**

As part of the broader effort to diversify Virginia's economy, the Chamber continues to support GO Virginia and its efforts to incentivize greater collaboration among localities, higher education, and the private sector. Maintaining the state's financial commitment to this program is especially important.

**Local Incentive Fund:**

At the local level, the Chamber supports the Board of Supervisors allocating funds to replenish the local incentive fund as appropriate.

**Business-Friendly Regulations:**

The Chamber opposes existing and proposed regulations that have or will have a demonstrably adverse impact on net business and job growth.

**Growth Control:**

The Chamber opposes arbitrary efforts to limit or suspend growth and economic development. The Chamber urges elected officials to be mindful that excessive and inconsistent restrictions placed on new business development or expansion that do not contribute materially to improving the quality and

effectiveness of that development send a negative signal to prospective and existing businesses considering our County as a place to locate and expand. The Chamber supports adherence to all commitments made in the course of any economic development negotiations by both government and the business.

**Zoning Ordinance Action Group (ZOAG):**

The Chamber fully endorses the mission of the Zoning Ordinance Action Group (ZOAG), which is to make the County's Zoning Ordinance more accurate, consistent and user friendly. Additionally, the Chamber supports ZOAG's continued work to ensure zoning ordinances and the 2019 Comprehensive Plan are kept current to both existing and anticipated market conditions.

**Development Process:**

The Chamber believes top priority should be given to review and improvements to the processes for approving development plans, building permit applications, the fees assessed, and other related government processes. Existing codes and procedural requirements that do not contribute to meaningful improvement of the application or proposal under consideration must be streamlined or eliminated, and fees assessed should be consistent with the actual cost to the County.

**Development Incentives:**

The Chamber supports an incentive-based approach, as opposed to mandates, to encourage the type of development that is desired in Loudoun County, including programs that incent green or sustainable development without adding additional time and expense to the development process.

**Loudoun County Economic Development Authority:**

The Chamber supports efforts to fully leverage the capabilities and strategic value that the Economic Development Authority (EDA) has to offer to Loudoun's long-term economic development potential. This includes the EDA's role in advancing housing affordability initiatives in Loudoun and its support for the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development's international business marketing and retention program.

**Small Business Economy:**

The Chamber strongly supports continued local and federal funding to support small business infrastructure, programs, and services. The Chamber also supports continued development of business

incubators and accelerators in the County that will allow for and encourage collaboration and innovation.

**Nonprofit Infrastructure:**

The Chamber is committed to advocating for initiatives that support the success of Loudoun’s nonprofit community including efforts to raise awareness about community human service needs, promoting opportunities for the public to provide financial and volunteer support, and supporting efforts within the nonprofit community to work with Board of Supervisors to ensure public-sector funding is commensurate with the growth and needs of the County.

## **Housing Diversity**

The Loudoun County Chamber supports more robust state and local policies directed at increasing the availability of a wide range of housing options, both rental and for sale, to meet the needs of Loudoun’s growing population and workforce. We encourage Loudoun County to adequately plan for a continuum of housing to support future economic development and a wide spectrum of job growth. The Chamber believes federal, state and local programs supporting workforce housing should be utilized and leveraged to the maximum extent practical.

**Housing Strategy:**

The Chamber supports the development of a comprehensive Loudoun County Housing Strategy that addresses the need for market rate, workforce and affordable housing throughout the County, and includes establishing goals for workforce housing based on credible demographic studies of needs. Prioritizing housing affordability as an economic development issue to increase the visibility, prioritization and effectiveness of Loudoun County’s housing opportunity programs through the reallocation of existing resources.

**Housing Trust Funds:**

The Chamber supports creating a sustainable, significant and dedicated funding source for Loudoun’s Housing Trust Fund to allow the County to effectively partner with the private sector and local, state and federal government entities to construct and operate more diverse and accessible housing options for

Loudoun's workforce. Loudoun should be competing for and leveraging funds available through flexible financing and low-interest loans under the Virginia Housing Trust Fund.

**Land Use:**

Promoting the use of County-owned vacant or under-utilized land and/or assets to be used or exchanged for the creation of affordable housing units or mixed-use development that includes affordable units as well as the adoption of higher densities in appropriate locations, particularly those areas surrounding and in the proximity of mass transit stations, to enable a greater number of quality housing products at all price points.

**Financing:**

Use of property tax credits, down payment programs, low interest loans, an expedited approval process, and other programs by the County to increase home ownership for low- to moderate-income households and for those seeking increased accessibility provisions. The Chamber also supports the use of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to investigate alternative project solutions, attract nonprofit developers, provide financing alternatives for potential projects, and potentially act as a housing authority.

**Rental Housing Act:**

Maintain and strengthen Virginia's existing Rental Housing Act as it pertains to the discretion of the housing provider to accept rent subsidies or other public assistance from a political subdivision of the Commonwealth or from the federal government;

**Capital Fees:**

The Chamber opposes the imposition of the fees for by-right development and a comprehensive examination of capital facility fees to ensure that they do not create a disincentive for businesses to locate in Loudoun County.

**TOURISM AND BUSINESS TRAVEL**

The Loudoun Chamber recognizes the quality of life and economic benefits that a thriving tourism destination contributes to Loudoun County. The Chamber also recognizes that tourism and travel does

not just occur and that a thriving destination requires marketing, promotion, and tourism coordination and development.

**Visit Loudoun:**

The Chamber supports Visit Loudoun's continued status as the recognized Destination Marketing Organization for Loudoun County. Because of the economic advantages offered by a robust visitor and conference/meetings industry, from both business and leisure travel, the Chamber supports an integrated, well-funded approach to marketing Loudoun as a visitor destination by Visit Loudoun. We believe that Loudoun's destination marketing and long-term and sustained funding strategy must place high priority on those activities that generate the most tax revenue, while creating economic opportunities for County businesses with the domestic and international leisure visitor, sports and events, and conference/meetings industry. Indoor and outdoor sporting, performing arts, museums, and multi-purpose venues deserve careful consideration to enhance the experience of the leisure and business traveler, as well as to attract more businesses to the County, especially in off-peak times of the year.

**Non-Traditional Tourism Destinations:**

In addition, the Chamber supports inclusion of high-value business sectors and corridors beyond those traditionally associated with tourism in the County's destination marketing strategy. These would include, but not be limited to, educational facilities like universities or training centers that attract large meetings and groups. In addition, the Chamber recommends that Loudoun's strategy target corporate travel decision makers to generate more overnight stays from the County's high value business sectors.

**Air Travel Marketing:**

The Chamber also recommends continued collaboration and increased coordination and support of marketing efforts between the County, Visit Loudoun, Washington Dulles International Airport and Leesburg Airport to promote existing, and to assist in future-air service development, for leisure, business domestic and international travel.

Given the opportunities to leverage Loudoun's unique tourism assets to benefit business expansion, while generating more leisure trips from the business travel market, the Chamber advocates that Visit Loudoun and the County continue to implement a comprehensively aligned approach to economic



development and its visitor/conference/sports marketing that is driven by measurable performance goals and metrics that ensure the appropriate level of accountability. These should include seeking state partnerships in regional marketing efforts or providing infrastructure that supports an expanded visitor economy.

**Tourism Friendly Regulation:**

The Chamber supports efforts to ensure that all regulations, taxes and zoning ordinances are structured to enable tourism to prosper and will help to distinguish Loudoun County as a preferred destination. The Chamber supports the tourism industry's position that favors the use of transit occupancy taxes (TOT) to promote tourism. The Chamber also encourages the County to include the tourism industry, through Visit Loudoun, in exploring options to fund needed infrastructure projects, especially access and transportation expansion.

**Short-Term Residential Rentals:**

As the lodging industry evolves to include a wide range of entities, from individuals renting out space in their homes, to traditional hotels and bed and breakfasts, the Chamber supports a level playing field for all entities that provide lodging options to visitors, including Short-Term Online Rental Market companies. The legal and regulatory environment for this sector should provide for equal tax treatment, transparency and data sharing, adherence to local zoning and safety regulations, and compliance with business licensing.

**Online Tourism Booking:**

In addition, the Chamber urges that online hotel room aggregators be held to the same regime regarding tax collection and remittance as others providing such services.

**GSA Per Diem:**

The removal of Loudoun County from the federal General Services Administration's Washington, D.C. per diem non-standard rate area has resulted in a severe reduction of the per diem rate for the County. The Chamber supports reinstating Loudoun County to the Washington, D.C. Non-Standard Area (NSA).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

The Loudoun Chamber supports managed, thoughtful growth in the County. This includes support for well-planned commercial growth and development that will bring additional resources to the County to help address the infrastructure challenges we face. The Chamber supports use of public-private partnerships and other creative initiatives that will increase the availability of resources to invest in critical infrastructure. The Chamber also supports an open dialogue and improved coordination between the business community and public sector on development and infrastructure issues.

### **Regional Transportation Solutions:**

The Chamber continues to support sustainable, long-term regional, statewide and federal transportation funding. To ensure new and existing transportation revenues are well invested, the Chamber supports performance-based evaluation and prioritization of projects in the regional and statewide transportation plans.

The Chamber supports construction of a comprehensive regional transportation grid and urges the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (the Authority) to be regional in its approach above all else, and to prioritize regional improvements based upon its adopted performance-based criteria which emphasizes congestion relief. The Chamber further urges the Authority to leverage and invest local, regional and state revenues in regional solutions that move the most people in the most cost-effective manner.

### **Congestion Relief Funding:**

The Chamber supports the most efficient use of current transportation dollars with greater emphasis on congestion reduction and economic development. The Chamber opposes using revenue from the Transportation Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes.

### **Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund:**

The Chamber also endorses requiring the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund to be self-sustaining and supports efforts to prohibit transfer of construction funds from the Transportation Trust Fund to make up for maintenance funding deficiencies.

**General Fund Allocation:**

The Chamber supports continued future use of some General Fund money for transportation purposes, given the tremendous transportation needs that still face the Commonwealth and the fact that transportation funding is a core government service that is the state’s primary responsibility to fund.

**Restoration of Regional Funds:**

The Chamber also supports the complete restoration of the \$102 million in regional funds transferred from the NVTAA and the local government partners as part of the state’s decision to provide dedicated funding for Metro.

**Dedicated Funding for Metro Maintenance:**

The Chamber supports Metro having dedicated funding to return the system to a state of good repair given how much our region’s economy depends on a reliable and safe transit system.

**Local Transit:**

The Chamber supports local transit to serve major job centers in the County and the use of advanced technology and integrated communications to improve transit accessibility and help alleviate traffic congestion.

**The Bi-County Parkway:**

The Chamber supports final design and construction of this project in a manner that mitigates impacts and further, the Chamber supports protection of right-of-way which will extend the Route 234 Bypass (the Prince William County Parkway) from the I-66 corridor to Route 50 and Northstar Boulevard. The Chamber also supports protection of a right-of-way to connect Northstar Boulevard to Route 606. Further, the Chamber supports a process that properly evaluates and compensates property owners around any eminent domain uses connected with the Bi-County Parkway.

**The Metrorail System:**

The Chamber acknowledges that if managed properly the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) system is a key part of the future economic growth and success of Loudoun County. The Chamber strongly endorses significant reforms for Metro in three areas – governance, funding, and operations. This endorsement includes support for new federal dedicated capital and operating funding

for WMATA for both capital and operating expenses, and regional funds. providing \$500 million in annual regional dedicated revenue for WMATA

**Dulles Greenway:**

The Chamber continues to support graduated tolling and other tolling options along the Dulles Greenway in order to increase utilization of that existing transportation corridor and reduce use of alternative, congested routes.

**Potomac River Crossings:**

The Chamber supports proper funding for repairs and improvements to the American Legion Bridge. In addition, the Chamber supports the identification of right-of-way for and construction of an additional Potomac River crossing in Loudoun County.

**Route 28:**

The Chamber supports completion of the conversion of Route 28 into an eight-lane limited access freeway between I-66 and Route 7;

**Route 50:**

The Chamber supports expansion of Route 50, and improvements to the collector road network and interchanges in the Dulles South area;

**Route 15:**

The Chamber supports improving and re-locating portions of U.S. Route 15 between Leesburg and Point of Rocks, and establishing a new location for the future replacement of the Point of Rocks Bridge;

**Route 9:**

The Chamber supports improving and re-locating portions of Route 9 to enhance connectivity with Route 7 and divert interstate traffic from the Town of Hillsboro;

**Route 7:**

The Chamber supports upgrading Route 7 to a limited access roadway between Purcellville to Route 28;

**Loudoun's Airports:**

The Chamber recognizes the positive economic impact that both Washington-Dulles International

Airport and Leesburg Executive Airport have on Loudoun County, and in that light, the Chamber fully supports continued infrastructure investment at both airports.

The Chamber supports development of new passenger and cargo services at Washington-Dulles International Airport, including expansion of facilities to provide for further growth. The Chamber supports the Airport's efforts to remain cost competitive, both regionally and nationally, and therefore opposes any attempt to expand perimeter rule exemptions at Reagan National Airport. In addition, the Chamber strongly supports maintaining and further developing airport-compatible land uses in the areas surrounding the airport to facilitate aviation development into the future, and access to Washington-Dulles International Airport.

**MWAA:**

The Chamber also supports continued efforts by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and others to ensure the Authority's transparency and accountability to the citizens of the Commonwealth and the jurisdictions in Northern Virginia.

**Air Transportation Marketplace:**

Further, the Chamber supports maintenance of a fully competitive air transportation marketplace, as well as Federal Air Traffic Control and aviation policy initiatives (including "NextGen" and "Open Skies" bilateral agreements) that enhance the airline and general aviation services available to our region.

**Development Near Leesburg Executive Airport:**

The Chamber supports the Town of Leesburg's efforts to support and grow Leesburg Executive Airport by maintaining compatible land uses within the Airport's Area of Influence, in order to protect previous taxpayer investments and maximize the airport's value as an economic development asset. The Chamber also encourages the Town of Leesburg to expand aircraft hangars at Leesburg Executive Airport to support economic development activities and support new business arrivals in the Town and the County.

**Aircraft Tax:**

The Chamber also supports the county tax policy on aircraft based in Loudoun County.

### **Technology:**

The Chamber supports the adoption of public policies that encourage continued expansion of private sector broadband services throughout the County, including strategic location of towers to support wireless access (broadband and voice).

### **Energy Infrastructure:**

The Chamber supports the energy infrastructure essential to meeting Loudoun's increasing energy needs, consistent with economic development and environmental considerations. Reliable, affordable energy is required to support the needs of business and to sustain the community's high quality of life. In addition, the Chamber supports participation with government agencies and others in framing responsible laws, regulations and standards affecting the community, the workplace and the environment in order to continually improve energy diversity, conservation and environmental programs.

### **Energy Diversification and Expansion:**

The Chamber recognizes that, as the County grows, its energy requirements will increase as well. These additional needs cannot be met by the current sources of energy. The Chamber acknowledges the solution must include a diverse mix of options, including increased conservation and energy efficiency, new sources of conventional and renewable energy, and new transmission and distribution infrastructure. Electricity load growth, particularly for large commercial loads such as data centers, frequently requires rapid infrastructure expansion to meet the energy requirements of these businesses. The Chamber supports a reasonable and timely approval process for infrastructure such projects.

### **Energy Plans:**

The Chamber supports the implementation of the goals outlined in the updated 2018 Virginia Energy Plan. At the local level, the Chamber encourages the timely review of the 2009 implementation of the County-wide energy plan to include an emphasis on energy generation, transmission and conservation.

### **Energy Regulation:**

The Chamber supports a holistic approach to energy policy, including incentives and proven market-based methodologies, to accomplish the identified goals whenever possible. The Chamber also believes

that every effort should be made to minimize additional financial burdens imposed on businesses and consumers by climate change regulation or legislation. Improperly crafted climate change regulation could have a significant detrimental impact on businesses and consumers alike.

**C-PACE:**

The Chamber also supports implementation of the C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) program, which is a bipartisan, voluntary local government initiative that allows property owners to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

**Public Water and Sewer:**

The Chamber believes that access to an affordable water and sanitary systems is important to the recruitment, retention and success of businesses in Loudoun County. The Chamber supports sustainably managing water resources in advocacy of health, environment and quality of life;

**Access Pricing:**

Competitive user and availability charges for water and sewer infrastructure to support economic development and the region's ability to attract and retain businesses;

**Innovative Solutions:**

Innovative, dependable and cost-effective technologies and partnerships for reclaimed water, as well as public-private partnerships, to assist in economic development efforts and support the national reputation of Loudoun County as the heart of data center activity.

## **EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**

### **K-12**

The Loudoun Chamber believes a top performing K-12 education system, both public and private, that equips our students with skills, training and knowledge to become productive lifelong members of our nation's workforce, is vital to the future prosperity and quality of life in our community. The Chamber embraces the critical leadership role that businesses and industry leaders play in ensuring the quality of instruction, programs and results from our K-12 schools and workforce training programs. It is critical that the business and education community be active partners to ensure there is a connection between

what students are taught, and how they are assessed, with the true workforce needs.

**Addressing Areas of Critical Need:**

The Chamber firmly supports policies and systems in which students are expected to achieve at internationally competitive levels of proficiency, particularly within areas of critical need – such as Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Healthcare (STEM-H). To achieve this aim, the Chamber supports policies and practices within Virginia’s educational systems that ensure the highest quality instruction, content and learning environment, and which advance the values and benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion for all students and employees.

**Local Composite Index:**

The Chamber Supports State and federal education funding that more appropriately reflects the full costs of all state and federal education mandates in addition to basic education costs. The Chamber continues to advocate for reforms to Virginia’s Local Composite Index because, as presently structured. The index places Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) at a disadvantage. The current index does not account for Loudoun’s unique needs caused by continued and substantial enrollment growth, increasing enrollment of students for whom English is not spoken in the home and is often a second language, and the enormous added financial burden of operating and offering competitive salaries in the high-cost metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. The current index also fails to accurately reflect the limited sources of revenues which local governments can access to pay for education at the higher percentage required through the current formula;

**Standards of Quality:**

The Chamber supports increased state funding for the revised Standards of Quality by three percent per year until the local share of education costs does not exceed 65 percent and the state share is equal to 35 percent of total costs

**Pre-K Education:**

The Chamber supports consideration of innovative strategies, public and private, to enable availability of pre-K education.

**Educator Benefits and Attraction:**

The Chamber supports full restoration of cost of competing funding for teachers and support staff and



funding to enable competitive and innovative compensation, as well as benefits packages, to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. The Chamber supports addressing the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth by refining and developing multiple streamlined affordable pathways into the profession to meet the needs of a variety of individuals, including career switchers, as well as to achieve a more diverse workforce within the educational community.

**Professional Development:**

The Chamber supports creating and fostering a culture that incentivizes excellence, innovation and initiative (beyond standardized tests scores as an evaluation method), and that includes meaningful professional development within our education system, to achieve maximum success.

**School Choice:**

The Chamber supports the choice for parents between traditional schools and other learning alternatives, and development of incentives to encourage “traditional” schools, teachers and administrators to innovate. The Chamber also supports flexible policies that enable public school attendance alternatives to assigned schools, such as open enrollment to better balance total enrollment among schools or enable students to pursue unique educational opportunities, and expansion of online education options for in-school and home-school students to foster successful individual educational outcomes;

**Charter and Magnet Schools:**

The Chamber supports the continued consideration and use, where and when they are deemed appropriate, of public charter schools and magnet schools that recognize that not all students learn in the same way or have the same interests, to expand the options available to Loudoun County students. The Chamber believes that local authorization and oversight of the inception, planning and support of public charter and magnet schools fosters cooperation and good will between these schools and school divisions and promotes the success of all students;

**Teacher Cabinet:**

The Chamber supports the creation of a Loudoun County Teacher Cabinet to provide an opportunity to actively engage a diverse group of Loudoun County teachers and seek input and innovative ideas from those teachers for consideration either within individual schools, as a pilot program, or systemwide. This would also provide an opportunity for stronger connectivity and engagement with our teachers and the

opportunity to encourage them to share their ideas and successes so that others may have the chance to benefit from them as well. It would also directly support the development of a culture of excellence, innovation and initiative within our school system.

**Commercial Educational Projects:**

In an effort to support STEM-H at an early age for all students and its importance to workforce and economic development, we support projects such as the Children's Science Center, which will offer educational opportunities to the citizens and students of Loudoun County, be a significant tourist draw and thus provide an economic benefit to the Loudoun economy.

**Technology Usage:**

The Chamber supports continued and even broader use of technology in the classroom, along with adequate professional development for teachers, so that technology can have the maximum benefit for all. The Chamber encourages the school system to seek broader collaboration efforts and exchange of ideas with neighboring school districts as technology takes a greater role in education. The Chamber believes it is also critical that technology infrastructure be available that meets LCPS' needs, and enables all schools and students throughout the County to have affordable, reliable internet access.

**Board of Supervisor and School Board Collaboration:**

The Chamber believes LCPS, the Loudoun County School Board and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors must continue to work to implement operational efficiencies within our school system. The Chamber also supports implementation of creative approaches to maximize and supplement traditional education funding. The Chamber also calls on the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, the Loudoun County School Board and LCPS to continue their efforts to work together on school site selection and land use permitting to further streamline the process and locate new schools in a manner that supports both the education and economic development mission of our community. The Chamber continues to strongly oppose the use of commercially planned or zoned land for school sites, given the importance of preserving this land for future economic development opportunities.

**Outsourcing:**

The Chamber supports careful evaluation of services currently provided by school system employees to determine if such services may be outsourced to provide greater efficiency, cost savings, competition

and business opportunities in the private sector, while still maintaining the highest quality educational environment.

**Consolidation:**

The Chamber supports consideration of consolidation of county and school functions to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings while still maintaining the highest quality educational environment.

**Public - Private Partnership:**

The Chamber supports continued and increased partnerships with nonprofit organizations and foundations in both funding and programming, given the demonstrated success of such programs and the geographic access to additional potential partners; and continued a greater use of school-business partnerships as a way for businesses to provide valuable resources of time, energy and funding to support the schools.

**K-12 Workforce Readiness:**

The Chamber supports development of innovative efforts which help enhance Loudoun's traditional K-12 efforts, providing a pathway for Loudoun students to further education or immediate employment in the region's high skill, high demand, and high wage employment sectors. This should include opportunities to receive college credit while in high school through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, industry certifications or a combination of these strategies.

In recognition of the vital link between schools and the region's potential skilled workforce, the Chamber further supports strong business-education partnerships to develop training programs for specific high demand & specialized industries, and a stronger focus on college and/or career readiness for students earlier in their K-12 education experience to better prepare them for success in whatever path they choose.

**Academies of Loudoun:**

The Chamber supports the Academies of Loudoun as a center for career and technical education programs that will create unprecedented opportunities for Loudoun students to innovate and collaborate, utilizing robust public/private partnerships.

## **Higher Education and Workforce Development**

The Loudoun Chamber recognizes the importance of and supports all of the colleges and universities, both public and private, which provide high quality high school dual enrollment opportunities, in addition to undergraduate, graduate and professional education to Loudoun's residents. The existing need for life-long education and training demands a higher education infrastructure that is accessible, both online and on campus, that is dynamically changing to meet the demands of the times and to produce the diverse workforce employers are seeking, and that is supported by adequate state funding, local capital support, loan guarantee programs and other financial means. The Chamber supports positioning the Commonwealth's public and private higher education institutions to play a full role in shaping job creation in a global knowledge-based economy. The Chamber calls on the Commonwealth's elected leaders to continue investing in state funding for higher education in order to shift some of the burden of funding from students and families. The Chamber believes, however, that new state investments should especially be targeted toward specific and definable goals.

### **Enrollment and Programmatic Growth**

The Chamber Supports significantly increasing the percentage of college-age Virginians enrolling in institutions of higher education and attaining degrees, or obtaining workforce credentials or certifications, and continuing aggressive expansion of the number of high-quality certificate programs and associate, bachelors, and graduate degrees awarded in an effort to prepare more Virginia residents to be employed in the diverse knowledge-based economy and service economy, including hands-on trades. Targeting the creation of new degrees in high income, high demand job sectors. Virginia's economy will depend on increasing the number of workers able to take on jobs in high demand fields of science, technology, engineering and math, and other critical areas experiencing workforce shortages.

### **Internships:**

Encouraging the creation of high-quality internship experiences (preferably paid) for college students. College graduates with real-world job experience are at a significant advantage when launching their careers.

### **Cyber Security Programs:**

The Chamber supports continued state funding for initiatives that develop the cybersecurity workforce,

such as the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative approved by the General Assembly in 2018. The CCI will bring together Virginia's higher education community and the private sector to create a consortium that will work together to develop innovative cybersecurity strategies, conduct cybersecurity research and development, and help train future cyber leaders. Innovation drives the northern Virginia economy. Loudoun businesses need an expanded way to interact with the area's higher education institutions to produce and commercialize original research. The Commonwealth remains one of the few states that do not have dedicated funding for technology transfer. University-based research can only be brought to market quickly if the Commonwealth supports it, and the Chamber believes such as the new Commonwealth Cyber Initiative can serve as a model for developing further collaborative efforts in other sectors.

### **Industry Certifications:**

The Chamber has long supported public and private efforts in job-specific, real-world training and believes this unique resource should be expanded and enhanced through increased and more consistent state funding and expanded access to certification programs, increased funding for financial aid for those students seeking industry certifications, matching state funding to encourage the private-sector to partner with the community college system to train workers, and an education effort to increase awareness of job opportunities for students achieving industry certifications. Further, the Chamber strongly supports efforts to increase the number of students graduating, transferring to four-year institutions, and/or receiving workforce credentials, with particular emphasis on industry certifications and other credentials that provide a pathway to high-wage, high skilled jobs. To the extent that these ventures could be offered at four-year colleges and universities the Chamber supports that as well.

The Chamber supports increasing the state funding identified to support the Commonwealth's Workforce Credentials Initiative.

### **Secondary Education Affordability:**

The Commonwealth and our higher education institutions must do more to encourage a greater number of students to seek education beyond high school in areas of application to workforce need. The cost of education should not be a barrier to getting a degree. Financial aid is a key ingredient in this affordability challenge. Without increases in state-funded financial aid, access and affordability will remain a problem.

With regard to our publicly funded institutions, the Chamber advocates a sustained, long-term program of higher education investment, reform and innovation – embodied in state law – to ensure affordable access for students and to generate strong economic activity, revenue growth for the County and lower social service costs. Overall funding for public higher education institutions remains inadequate to fully address the workforce development needs of our region. The Chamber opposes any action to mandate cap tuition increases. The Chamber believes that each institution must be provided the flexibility to address any fiscal shortages by balancing the needs of mission-critical activities against student affordability.

**Tuition Grant and COLA:**

The Chamber continues to support sufficient Tuition Assistance Grant funding, both for undergraduate and graduate students, and notes that a periodic Cost of Living (COLA) adjustment for college and university employees should occur more regularly than in recent years.

**Capital Project Reimbursement:**

In addition, we urge the Governor and General Assembly to make permanent the existing program that reimburses institutions when they use their own funds to advance planning for critical capital projects for public four-year institutions and community colleges.

**Two and Four-Year Institution Partnership:**

In today's economy, encouraging partnerships that build on strengths of various institutions allows for the best use of limited resources. Two- and four-year institutions should be allowed and encouraged to partner in ways that reduce the total cost of degree completion. For example, the Chamber fully supports ongoing funding for programs like SySTEMic Solutions, a collaboration between the Northern Virginia Community College, higher education institutions and public schools, which prepares students for careers in STEM fields. The Chamber also supports the ADVANCE Career Accelerator, a new career services platform designed by George Mason University and the Northern Virginia Community College to create stronger education-workforce connections to ensure that program curricula are aligned with industry needs, and to offer students relevant career learning experiences.

**State Transfer Grant Program:**

The Chamber supports enhancements to the established State transfer grant program, particularly for

students in STEM-H fields, helps to increase the rate of bachelor's degree completion for students moving from two-year to four-year institutions.

**Military Veteran Job Training:**

The Chamber supports help for programs that provide veterans and their families with access to job training, education programs and credit for documented military training and experience gained during their service is essential for filling job vacancies, especially in cybersecurity and other IT fields.

**Technical Education:**

The Chamber supports the establishment of varied pathways for students to earn credits toward graduation and/or career and technical education credentials. This would allow for a more individualized path to achieving a career and college-ready designation at the secondary level. In addition, the Chamber supports added state funding to allow school divisions to adjust their career and technical education programs to better meet the changing workforce needs within their communities, and to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

**EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR ISSUES**

The Loudoun Chamber supports legislative and regulatory policies that stimulate economic growth and job creation by allowing businesses to fairly manage their personnel resources without undue government or outside intervention. The Chamber supports allowing free market conditions to determine important labor issues, such as compensation and conditions of employment, and supports all employers meeting their legal and ethical obligations to their employees and the government. The Chamber opposes expanded government manipulation of the workplace, including legislation and regulatory policies that would limit an employer's right to operate during a labor dispute.

**Immigration:**

The Chamber advocates that all businesses strictly comply with state and federal labor laws regarding the screening of citizenship documentation provided by employees, to avoid the hiring of individuals who are not lawfully residing in the U.S. The Chamber advocates that any worker verification system not unduly burden employers, be properly funded, and have a high data integrity confidence factor.

The Chamber also recognizes that immigrants play a key role in the prosperity and growth of northern Virginia, filling key jobs in every sector of our economy and contributing to the rich cultural and intellectual experience that characterizes our region. To remain competitive and grow to meet future demands for products and services, businesses need access to skilled and unskilled foreign workers to fill jobs.

In support of these objectives, the Chamber supports initiatives that will ensure an adequate supply of workers to support businesses in this region, including a limited guest worker program to fill gaps in our workforce and continue to expand visas for professionals and highly skilled workers, and those that support seasonal industries, temporary labor shortages, and small businesses.

#### **Unionization and Right-to-Work:**

The Chamber supports Virginia's Right-to-Work law and opposes any existing or proposed local, state or federal laws or regulations that undermine it. The Right-to-Work law permits workers the freedom to choose whether to join a union and has played a historically significant role in the Commonwealth's nationally recognized economic and employment growth. The Chamber opposes all federal legislative or regulatory proposals that undermine the rights of Virginia's workers to secret ballot elections to decide whether to form a union.

The Chamber also opposes the creation of micro-unions, which undermine Virginia's Right to Work laws by allowing unions to be formed, not by the preference of the employees as a whole, but rather by each individual department, section or other faction within a workplace. The Chamber opposes legislative and/or regulatory proposals that unduly burden business owners such as wage levels and work hours, and collective bargaining in the absence of an agreement between management and employees.

#### **Ambush Union Elections:**

The Chamber supports repeal of the National Labor Relations Board's Ambush Election rule which undermines employers' due process rights and prevents workers from getting balanced information about forming a union. (QUESTION: Isn't there something in the works to repeal this?)

#### **Joint Employer Standard:**

The Chamber supports well-established joint employer standards under the National Labor Relations



Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and other federal and state laws that have existed and worked well for many years. Generally, these standards permit separate entities to be determined to be a joint employer only if they exercise direct and immediate control over another business's employees, including having the ability to hire, fire, discipline, supervise or direct an individual. The Chamber opposes loosening of these standards such that one employer could be held liable for labor and employment law violations of another employer for which the first employer had no direct control or responsibility.

**Unemployment Compensation:**

The Chamber supports Virginia's unemployment compensation laws, which provide adequate and temporary financial assistance, at the expense of employers, to employees who become unemployed through no fault of their own. The Chamber opposes the extension of benefits to workers who, through their own actions or inactions, become unemployed, including during an employee strike.

**Wage and Benefit Mandates:**

The Chamber seeks to ensure that any new workplace regulations or mandates in areas like minimum wage, paid leave, and employment policy are workable and do not impose undue burdens on employers, especially small businesses.

**Workers' Compensation:**

The Chamber opposes any changes to Virginia's workers' compensation law that would increase costs and regulatory burdens on businesses, or otherwise undermine the law's existing sound principles and purpose.

**Davis-Bacon Act:**

The Chamber supports the outright repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires businesses to pay employees in the construction industry government-determined prevailing wages and benefits on federal and federally-assisted construction contracts exceeding \$2,000 in total cost. The Chamber also opposes expanded interpretation of this law to cover minor activities that are ancillary to the overall contract.

**Project Labor Agreements:**

The Chamber opposes project labor agreements (PLAs) mandated by local, state and federal governments, and other entities, on taxpayer-funded construction projects. Government-mandated PLAs end open, fair and competitive bidding on public works projects by discouraging competition from qualified nonunion contractors and their nonunion employees.

**In-sourcing:**

The Chamber opposes any federal, state, or local in-sourcing of private-sector labor positions to government-sector positions, unless the function being in-sourced is inherently governmental in nature and/or the in-sourcing decision is substantiated by a bona-fide cost-benefit analysis that shows that efficiencies and documented cost savings will result from the in-sourcing activity. Any such cost-benefit analysis must reflect all true costs associated with both the private-sector activity, as well as the government-sector activity, to include items such as, but not limited to, direct labor costs, fringe benefit costs, retirement costs, overhead costs, general and administrative costs, and any other direct and indirect costs that would be incurred by either party.

**Out-sourcing / Commercial-off-the-shelf Acquisition:**

The Chamber opposes government competition with private industry and encourages out-sourcing of government-sector contracts and positions when such competition exists. The Chamber also supports efforts to ensure that federal procurement officials adhere to the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA) which require federal agencies, to the maximum extent practicable, procure commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) technology that is available to meet their needs.

**Background Checks:**

Criminal and credit background checks can be a useful tool for employers to protect customers, workers and assets. The Chamber opposes any effort at any level of government to restrict the ability of employers to use these tools to appropriately screen job applicants.

**Independent/Outside Contractors:**

The Chamber opposes any initiative which would unduly prevent or otherwise restrict businesses from utilizing the services of independent/outside contractors in full compliance with current Virginia and

federal laws. The Chamber also opposes any effort to administratively, by statute or through legal action, redefine the term “contractor” to impose additional wage and benefit costs on employers.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Loudoun County has long-established, broad and effective environmental protections set out in its ordinances and regulations, including the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance, Facilities Standards Manual and Revised General Plan. Such protections have ensured a thorough and effective network of environmental protections, which has garnered Loudoun County honors as one of the nation’s most environmentally sensitive jurisdictions. The Chamber supports a holistic environmental strategy that is flexible, respects private property rights and the aspirations of businesses, and reflects Loudoun’s diverse urban, suburban, and rural land uses. This includes local, state, and federal environmental initiatives that rely on market-based incentives and voluntary compliance.

### **Conservation Initiatives**

The Chamber specifically supports voluntary initiatives promoting conservation, efficiency, and other economically viable business practices. While the Chamber believes these initiatives must minimize financial burdens imposed on both businesses and residents and advance a Loudoun-specific environmental strategy that is flexible and reflects the County’s diverse land uses in its urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The Chamber believes any conservation initiative must support the implementation of state and/or federally-approved trading programs for wetlands, streams, and stormwater mitigation and have a measurable and positive impact and utilize incentives and proven market-based methodologies to accomplish its stated objectives.

### **Conservation Regulations in Development:**

Given the effect that the land development application process can have on a prospective business’s site selection decision, the Chamber supports efforts by the Board of Supervisors to fully evaluate the impact of existing and proposed environmental regulations, such as Virginia’s Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), on Loudoun’s competitive advantages relative to other jurisdictions.

The Chamber objects to County duplication of Section 404 Clean Water Act Permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Virginia Water Protection Program Permits issued by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (i.e. collectively known as “Wetlands Permits”) as such actions delay approvals and increase costs for businesses without a commensurate environmental benefit.

**Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP):**

The Chamber supports reasonable, scientifically-valid efforts to protect the Chesapeake Bay. The Chamber supports a final WIP that achieves the requirements imposed by state and federal governments with the least possible cost and burden to Loudoun’s businesses and commercial taxpayers. The WIP also must reflect the input of business stakeholders who will be required to comply with the process and its restrictions and bear the costs of compliance for years to come.

**Storm Water Management:**

The Chamber advocates stakeholder outreach programs in the development of any storm water or erosion and sediment control regulations and, because insufficient resources can lead to uncertainty and delay for permittees, the Chamber also supports the full funding of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) staff to implement said programs. For those jurisdictions which have chosen to administer the Stormwater Management Program locally, the Chamber supports a larger portion of the permitting fees collected being returned to the administering entity.

**State Funding:**

The Chamber also advocates for sufficient state funding for the Virginia Agriculture Cost-Share program and the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund that support best management practices that are necessary to meet the Phase III WIP local pollution reduction goals.

**Conservation/Environmental Protection Incentives:**

The Chamber also supports policies that provide appropriate incentives – including, but not limited to, tax credits, development densities, fast track permitting approval and other measures that are competitive with those offered in surrounding jurisdictions – for businesses that invest in environmentally sustainable building designs and systems.

## LAND USE

### **Comprehensive Plan Reviews:**

The Chamber supports a strong and effective business stakeholder input and review process for the continued improvement of Loudoun's Comprehensive Plan, in part to ensure that land use policies and land use designations reflect the current and future needs of businesses. The Chamber also advocates that Loudoun County conduct a regular and thorough review of its Comprehensive Plan – touching on all components of the Plan – at least every five years.

### **Comprehensive Plan Revisions:**

The Chamber supports a revision of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and associated policies and regulations, that make certain that Loudoun's land use categories, and designated land use areas, ensure commercial land inventory is sufficient and responsive to the full complement of current and future market demands. The Chamber believes each revision should provide maximum flexibility to allow landowners and other businesses to adapt to changing market and economic conditions.

### **Transit Station Area Development:**

The Chamber supports a safe, reliable, and appropriately managed Metrorail system as a critical component of the County's economy. The Chamber supports policies that will continue to encourage transit-oriented, mixed-use development principles around Metrorail stations and multimodal transit use, reduce automobile traffic, incorporate safe pedestrian and bicycle options, increase the County's commercial tax base.

### **Urban Housing Types:**

The Chamber supports incorporating urban forms of residential development at Metrorail stations to achieve live-work centers, support the County's existing economic development objectives, and provide a mixture of housing types and sizes to enhance affordable and workforce housing opportunities and options for residents with different income levels.

### **Urban Transportation Investment:**

To address transportation infrastructure needs around Metrorail stations, the Chamber supports public-private partnerships between employers, transit agencies, and developers.

**Interim Uses:**

The Chamber also favors interim development strategies regarding the evolution, repurposing, and greater utilization of existing underdeveloped properties into dense, mixed-use development.

**Airport Compatible Uses:**

The Chamber supports carefully-considered, Airport-compatible uses with respect to the Airport Impact Overlay District.

**Proffer Reform:**

The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to fully evaluate the effects of the existing proffer statute and supports efforts to mitigate adverse impacts on development. The Chamber encourages the County and developers to consider additional strategies that would provide flexibility with respect to conditional zoning entitlements and continued private-sector investment

**FISCAL POLICY**

The Loudoun County Chamber asserts that the time is far overdue to evaluate Virginia's overall tax structure to ensure it reflects today's economy and adequately balances government's ability to fund vital core government services and operations that businesses and residents require, with the goal of maintaining a strong pro-business environment that enhances the County's and Virginia's economic competitiveness. Included in this evaluation should be consideration of state allocations to local government that were frozen at the time of the law's enactment to ensure those formulas reflect current economic reality. With this, the Loudoun Chamber strongly urges elected-government officials to actively engage the Chamber and other business leaders in every stage of consideration and development of any new fiscal policies that impact the business climate – to enable the benefit of a business-like approach to any policy changes and protect against consequences that could come with changes that would negatively impact Virginia's economy and business success.

**Resource Allocation:**

The Chamber supports the alignment of business and residential taxpayer resources with government operations that serve the most vital interests of the County;

**Tax Policy:**

The Chamber supports comprehensive tax policies that positively impact Loudoun's economic competitiveness and quality of life, not just on the revenues that are anticipated and substantive reform of Virginia's entire tax system to more closely align the source of the Commonwealth's tax revenues with the spending priorities of state and local governments;

**Local Rebate:**

The Chamber supports investment in essential infrastructure via a rebate of a percentage of the state individual income tax back to the locality from which it was collected.

**High Growth Area Investment:**

The Chamber supports additional state investment in economic development for high growth areas and to support the increased capital costs associated with that growth. The Chamber supports business-friendly tax policy that considers policies in other states, to enhance Virginia's competitiveness in national and international markets and the use of business sales tax exemption and strongly urges the full consideration of the overall economic impact of a business or industry's presence in Virginia prior to any business sales tax exemption, as well as before considering any other significant change to business tax policy.

**Economic Protection:**

In addition, the Chamber supports continued investments in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), the "Rainy Day" Fund, the Federal Action Contingency Trust Fund, and targeted reserve funds as a hedge against any economic downturn, including those resulting from federal spending reductions that have a disproportionate impact on the state economy. With this, the Chamber actively supports efforts to use tax policy, where appropriate, to support diversification of Virginia's economy, particularly in the defense industry, to enable those businesses and the Commonwealth as a whole, to reverse the impacts of federal sequestration.

**Debt:**

The Chamber strongly supports legislation to require that the state place its share of teacher pension

liabilities on its financial statements. The County has no control over decisions made with regard to the program and it could have a negative impact on the County's bond rating to have those liabilities on the County's financial statements. The funding of federal agencies and departments via full year appropriations bills rather than stopgap measures. This will allow agencies and departments to start new programs and to award multi-year contracts, and will provide the private sector with the certainty needed to initiate and maintain new and existing products and services. Efforts to achieve long-term federal deficit and debt reduction through an informed, thoughtful, comprehensive plan, which may include a phased-in approach to reducing the unaffordable growth in entitlement spending as well as revenue generation reforms that will strengthen the economy over the long term, while not impeding growth in the short term.

**Tariffs:**

We oppose unilateral tariffs and any subsequent retaliation.

**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 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. The Chamber continues to support continued statutory ethics reform for the executive branch, banning the use of campaign funds for personal expenses, 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 respecting the requirements outlined in the state Constitution and existing boundaries; ensuring that districts are compact, contiguous, and keep communities together; and drawing districts that neither the intent to target individuals nor to the benefit of one political party.

**Two-Term Governor:**

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.

**LEGAL POLICY**

The Chamber firmly supports maintaining Virginia's common-sense legal system, which has enabled the Commonwealth to achieve its best-in-class economic environment. The Chamber also firmly opposes measures that would increase the burden of excessive litigation and diminish Virginia's competitive position.

**Appointment of Judges:**

In addition, the Chamber supports the prompt appointment of new judges to replace any retiring judges in the Circuit Court and the appropriation of funding for additional judicial positions in the Circuit Court to accommodate the increasing civil and criminal caseload.

**Business Court:**

The Chamber supports establishing a business court system in the Commonwealth that would focus exclusively on business disputes.

**Alternative Resolution:**

Arbitration and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, to include, but not be limited to, arbitration, mediation, and small claims procedures, that reduce the number of lawsuits and their costs, while ensuring justice is served. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods and processes, such as arbitration, mediation, and small claims procedures, provide consumers, employees, and other injured parties with an accessible and fair process for obtaining redress for claims and can in many cases avoid

the expense and inefficiency of litigation. The Chamber opposes efforts by the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and other federal agencies to significantly restrict or even ban the use of ADRs.

**Class Action Reform:**

The Chamber supports class action reform and opposes efforts to weaken the Class Action Fairness Act.

**Restoration of Due Process Rights**

The Chamber supports Restoring employers' due process rights by eliminating incentives for officials, regulators, and plaintiff's lawyers to file charges against a company – that may or may not have done something wrong – merely to press secret financial settlements on those companies in exchange for dropping said charges.

**Data Breach Requirements:**

Currently, American businesses spend on average \$6.5 million to respond to a single data breach, including the price of notifying potentially affected individuals and ensuing legal costs. As the amount of data collected from and about people increases, the number of breaches has also grown. The U.S. has a patchwork of outdated federal laws intended to protect personal information. At the same time, states have passed their own laws, which impose different (and sometimes contradictory) requirements for data privacy. The Chamber supports a standard federal law governing breach notification requirements that addresses real harms and places reasonable limits on businesses' liability while discouraging meritless suits.

## **Healthcare and Wellness**

The Chamber supports collaborative efforts between healthcare stakeholders, including providers, purchasers, insurers and consumers, to ensure continued innovation, creativity and transformation in the healthcare marketplace. The Chamber recognizes the importance of the healthcare industry to the economy and the community and supports maximum flexibility to encourage business to provide the best health insurance options for employees in the free market system. The Chamber is extremely concerned about the impact of federal healthcare reform on the business community and urges careful

consideration of the impact of any further policy changes or regulations developed in this arena. The Chamber also supports initiatives that improve quality and lower costs; promote healthcare pay-for-performance; encourage fair regulation of the insurance market; expand the use of healthcare data and technology to improve treatment and the patient experience; create an emphasis on prevention, and workplace wellness.

**Reimbursement:**

The Chamber supports appropriate federal and state reimbursement levels that allow primary care providers, specialists, and hospitals to care for patients and reduce the displacement of costs to those who are privately insured. The Chamber strongly opposes legislation that would limit access, increase costs for employers and workers, further reduce provider reimbursements, and inhibit innovation. This may include, but is not limited to, a national, single-payer, government-run healthcare system such as “Medicare-for-All” and “Medicare Buy-In.” In addition, we remain concerned about the regulatory burdens placed on businesses as well as the negative impact the lack of predictability has on the health care market and the economy.

**Insurance Marketplace:**

The Chamber supports legislation that stabilizes the insurance marketplace and ensures access to affordable and stable group health insurance for all businesses, including sole proprietors and businesses with few employees, as well as individuals. The Chamber supports legislation that reduces state burdens and provides tax incentives to help small businesses offset the staggering increases in health insurance costs, including incentives that encourage participation in “consumer-driven” healthcare and wellness plans.

**Preventative Services and Treatment:**

The Chamber also recognizes the important role of mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse and addiction treatment services in creating and maintaining a healthy workforce. The Chamber supports increased resources dedicated to delivering innovation and system improvements to the mental health delivery system that enables individual’s and family’s access to preventative, community-based non-emergency services, while also ensuring the care, safety and support of persons in crisis. The Chamber also supports efforts to greater leverage private-sector providers to address these needs in the community.

**Medicaid Reform:**

The Chamber believes that review and reform of Virginia's Medicaid system should be ongoing. While some steps have been taken to this end, there is still the need to identify and implement areas of reform to achieve quality healthcare and savings to ensure the taxpayers' dollars are being spent as efficiently as possible.

**Consumer Communication:**

The Chamber supports effective communication and education of the many changes in the healthcare laws and marketplace to create an informed consumer.

**Access to Healthcare:**

The Chamber supports the expansion of healthcare infrastructure (both inpatient and outpatient) to meet community needs along with an increased supply of well-trained health personnel and appropriate planning for emergency preparedness and public-private partnerships to address pandemic preparedness and support for a robust volunteer Medical Reserve Corps. The Chamber seeks to protect and expand services offered by safety net healthcare providers, so all Loudoun's residents have access to healthcare, while enhancing quality, choice, unbiased data transparency, and diminishing redundancies and waste.