



# Federation Priorities: 2020 Legislative Session

Local chambers represent economic vitality in their communities. The Minnesota Chamber Federation unites and amplifies the voice of local chambers by advocating for policies to advance business in every corner of the state. Federation partners represent more than 43 communities and more than 21,000 businesses. They have worked to promote pro-growth policies to the Legislature for more than a decade, helping ensure that state lawmakers understand the needs and interests of Minnesota's diverse and successful local business community.

## **The Federation has the following policy priorities for the 2020 legislative session:**

### **Workplace Management**

We are committed to providing the best workplaces for employees. This includes sharing employers' best practices so all businesses are aware of effective approaches to maintaining progressive workplaces to retain and compete for the best employees. Employers adhere to strict labor laws and workplace standards at the state and federal levels to maintain safe, healthy, respectful and inclusive workplaces. They must have flexibility to make staffing decisions and provide appropriate wages, benefits and schedules for their workplace and industry.

*We oppose "one size fits all" state mandates that limit employers' ability to design competitive benefit packages for their employees.*

Minnesota has 853 cities and 87 counties. When local-level government bodies pass workplace mandates, it creates an administrative nightmare for employers and could cause unintentional errors subjecting businesses to legal action.

*We support state legislation that explicitly prohibits local government labor mandates.*

As new laws and regulations are imposed on Minnesota's employers, enacting technical changes can create onerous compliance concerns.

*We will pursue modifications to the 2019 wage theft law that has far-reaching, overly complicated requirements for employers.*

### **Tax Competitiveness**

Minnesota's high taxes continue to rank as a top barrier to economic growth, according to chamber members. Business taxes are among the highest in the nation in many categories. High taxes negatively impact innovation, entrepreneurship, talent recruitment and investment – the very catalysts needed to foster economic growth. The Minnesota Chamber Federation has a broad tax reform agenda including business property tax relief, personal and corporate rate reductions, estate tax federal conformity and enhancement of the research and development tax credit.

*We support tax relief for businesses that pay taxes through their personal tax returns and adopting federal conformity with Section 179 business expensing rules.*

### **Environmental Sustainability**

We recognize scientific consensus that the climate is changing due to human activity. Environmental sustainability and economic competitiveness, if done right, are not mutually exclusive.

*We encourage the Legislature to recognize that state policies could result in disruption or discontinuation of business operations in Minnesota, considerably affect state and local economies, and may only marginally impact global environmental progress.*

*We support state policymakers pursuing policies that collectively enable a cleaner environment, recognize technological and economic limitations, consider implications to*



*safety and reliability, support and advance innovation, maintain a secure economy and protect jobs.*

*We support environmental policies that drive private investment in Minnesota while helping employers reduce environmental impacts.*

### Health Care

Minnesota already requires health insurance policies to cover more than 60 benefits – one of the longest lists of required benefits in the country. Large employers tend to insure their workers under federal law. As a result, these state mandates negatively impact small employers. Research shows the average mandate increases premiums by .44% to 1.11% annually.

*We support requiring a cost-benefit analysis before any proposal to add insurance mandates to state law.*

### Education and Workforce Development

Minnesota's education and workforce development efforts must align with employer needs, for our skilled workforce to continue to be a cornerstone of our competitive business climate. Systemic reforms are necessary to raise all student achievement, ensuring every high school graduate is ready for postsecondary education or a career.

*We support private-sector initiatives to increase employer engagement in the training of workers in addition to*

*supporting policies that ensure student readiness. Local chambers' private-sector led "Business Education Network" is connecting employers, students and learning institutions to local job opportunities and needed academic and training preparation for those jobs.*

Students are better prepared for the future when they make meaningful career connections during their school years. Postsecondary and dual-credit programs provide high school students with credit toward certificates and degrees from high schools, two-year colleges and four-year universities, and should be promoted.

*We support fostering and encouraging career exploration and hands-on training opportunities for students.*

Postsecondary institutions and workforce programs should track and adapt to changes in the labor market and workforce needs. Access to work-based learning and career pathway resources should be expanded with data-driven efforts including workforce supply and demand projections.

*We support using data to better understand training needs and high-demand careers. Transparency and accessibility improvements should be made to allow students to make informed decisions on the institutions and programs that best fit their needs.*

## Minnesota Chamber Federation Partners

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce  
Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce  
Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce  
Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce  
Cuyuna Lakes Chamber of Commerce  
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce  
The Chamber of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks  
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce  
Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce

Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism  
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Mankato Growth Inc.  
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau  
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce  
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce  
Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce and CVB  
Laurentian Chamber of Commerce  
Litchfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce  
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce  
New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce  
Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce  
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Pipestone Area Chamber of Commerce  
River Heights Chamber of Commerce  
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce  
St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce  
Shakopee Chamber and Visitors Bureau  
SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce  
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce  
Waconia Chamber of Commerce  
Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce  
White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce  
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce  
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce  
Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce  
Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce