

2023 Regional Legislative Action Agenda

The Midstate Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of nearly 500 member businesses and not for profit organizations in Meriden and surrounding communities. The 2023 Legislative Action Agenda lists priorities that are the keys to maintaining economic opportunities, and creating sound business growth in the region, with a specific focus on activities in Berlin, Meriden & Wallingford. **We ask that our legislators recognize the impact of their actions on business and to support a pro-business environment** where:

- The high costs of doing business in Connecticut are recognized, analyzed and reduced so business can remain competitive.
- Businesses are profitable, and able to make investments in personnel, technology, machinery and equipment to open new business opportunities.
- Mandatory government functions are efficiently done, so to utilize private partnerships to perform that work.
- Provide adequate and responsible oversight and regulation while outsourcing other functions whenever possible.
- Public / private partnerships receive support toward the long-term goal of revenue growth.
- Regional solutions are implemented to achieve cost savings and efficiencies.

The 2023 Legislative Agenda is a vehicle to build solid relationships and productive alliances with our elected and appointed officials of all levels of government to improve the business climate in Connecticut.

The Economic Development agenda is to:

- Continue to seek and support public and private partnerships to procure expertise and funding sources for comprehensive development along the Hartford Line corridor.
- Amend existing legislative statutes to allow for creation of an authority in Meriden to procure funding sources for the TOD
- Coordinate housing policy as a tool and include major area employers in making housing policy.
- Further the development of the TOD activities including encouraging and permitting market rate housing development.
- Devote additional state resources to older urban

Highlighted text is included on the Executive Summary document.

areas for urban revitalization.

- Promote and market Opportunity Zone properties and Adaptive Re-Use in Meriden.
- Support the creation of a co-working environment in the TOD to support entrepreneurs and small and minority businesses.

The State Fiscal Policy agenda is to:

- Continue implementing a realistic State Fiscal Policy that requires efficiencies and cost reductions which review and eliminate costly and ineffective state programs and eliminate cost drivers.
- Continue funding Education as priority.
- Continue to align salary and benefit packages for state employees with those of the private sector.
- Continue to reduce the state pension liability.
- Utilize pandemic funding responsibly so as not to incur long-term and permanent, unsustainable costs.
- Re-instate the CT Law Review Commission to review current statutes to align with today's business climate.
- Provide adequate funding for contracts with not-for-profits that provide services more efficiently on behalf of the State of CT and increase contracting for such services with not-for-profit organizations.
- Ensure that nonprofit property tax exemptions are protected and provide disincentives for municipalities to wrongly deny tax exemption applications.

The Transportation agenda is to:

- Advocate to improve availability and ease of access from transit center to employment centers including the Meriden Mall, Research Parkway and MidState Medical Center.
- Expand public transportation schedules, especially buses, to align with the needs of businesses, the public and employees.
- Encourage increased use of public transit in order to reduce traffic and improve efficiency throughout the region.

The Workforce agenda is to:

- Advocate for programs, including affordable childcare and other incentives to allow people to return to the workforce.
- Continue Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, IT, and Trades programs and align with education for ample pipeline of talent and skills.

- Keep Connecticut's workforce skilled and competitive by investing in training programs through existing Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, technical high schools and other resources to make Connecticut's businesses more productive and competitive.

The Energy / Technology agenda is to:

- Encourage businesses to participate in energy efficiency programs including Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) and renewable energy options.
- Take a fresh look at energy: including investigating rates, generation and distribution, and regulation in the area and options and benefits of alternative systems and planning for future capacity in the region.

The Education agenda is to:

- Develop and implement a sustainable system for funding education from early learning to post graduate education.
- Create a course of study which reflects the needs of Connecticut's business community, including financial literacy as part of high school graduation requirements.
- Continue to fully fund and promote PACT (Pledge to Advance Connecticut) - the free community college tuition program.
- Strengthen the presence of Middlesex Community College in the city of Meriden both now and in the future as the 12 community colleges consolidate into one statewide institution.
- Support and promote seamless transfers among the CT College System.

The Health Care agenda is to:

- Support the continuation of Access Health CT.
- Maintain support of affordable and universal healthcare including Medicare and Medicaid funding.
- Promote a healthy community through the support of recreation programs, regional greenways and encouraging public / private partnerships.
- Develop continuous planning for future crises / pandemics to respond quickly and avoid economic damage to business and employment.