



2019-2020 Legislative Agenda

The advocacy role of the Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce centers around three key components: educating its members, building relationships, and creating capital for the regional business community. To accomplish a successful program, the Aurora Chamber develops a Public Policy Agenda that focuses on its goals.

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce represents business from the greater Aurora area. We act as the voice for business and we are committed to ensuring a favorable economic, legal, and regulatory climate for the business community. Our mission is to publicly support policies that will protect our member business needs and facilitate economic growth in our region. We hope that you will take the time to become engaged in these issues and, in turn, communicate with your elected representatives.

At all levels of government, well-intentioned initiatives often have unintended consequences. Without input from the business community, these initiatives could adversely impact the ability of businesses to stay healthy, generate jobs, and create a higher standard of living. However, when business leaders communicate with their elected officials, better public policies result. A Chamber-generated legislative scorecard tracking local elected officials and Chamber-identified legislation may be found in Appendix K.

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for business and believes in free enterprise. The Chamber reserves the right to involve itself in rule-making decisions. It is a priority to support our business community by assisting in the cutting of red tape and removing excessive restrictions. The Chamber will be proactive on issues of concern to its business membership, including:

Government & Ethics

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce strongly supports increased collaboration and sharing of resources between local units of government to improve the cost effectiveness and the efficiency of service delivery to taxpayers and business.

The State of Illinois continues to need more reform to ensure all public officials are held to the highest standards and all elections are fair and open. The Chamber supports:

- An amendment to the Illinois Constitution that creates an independent commission to draw legislative district boundaries.
- Consolidation of municipal/taxing bodies to reduce the tax burden of residents and businesses.
- Continued efforts to share services and equipment when appropriate.

- Long-term budget projections to help stabilize the State's annual budget process.
- An aggressive, fiscally responsible plan to pay down the backlog of unpaid bills that hurt local employers.

Education & Workforce Development

Education is integral to the community and fosters a desirable quality of life that attracts and supports a thriving business environment. Adequate funding for our schools is imperative. Public education should provide a well-educated workforce that will enable attraction of new employers and the retention and expansion of existing businesses. Because the business community is a stakeholder in the quality of public education, we encourage business involvement in all aspects of public education. The Chamber encourages:

- Development of an adequate and predictable funding formula that enables the education system to deliver an affordable and quality education to all students.
- Improving the region's education and quality of workforce by supporting education reform at the local, State, and Federal levels that improve school outcomes.
- Building the capacity for enhancement of parent/guardian engagement, community involvement, and cultural diversity in students' learning and development.
- Strengthening the articulation and accessibility between our education systems and workforce.
- Access to high quality, life-long career development for the region's present and future jobs.
- Efforts to create quality programs and services that will increase entrepreneurship.

Economic Development

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce supports economic development initiatives that will make our region's businesses stronger, healthier, and more prosperous. The Chamber supports business by encouraging and playing a key role in economic development. The Chamber will support economic development policies that are aimed at encouraging business investment and improving business productivity. The Chamber supports:

- International business investment and trade opportunities.
- Balanced environmental regulations with the social and economic realities.
- Enhancing our region's infrastructure to increase efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and self-sufficiency.
- Creating an environment that fosters an entrepreneurial focus for small and emerging businesses.
- Legislators fostering a competitive climate between Illinois and nearby states.

- Additional sources of assistance from the State to increase job creation, business expansion, and increased utilization of goods and services.
- Assisting with the growth and development of leading-edge initiatives.
- Continued collaboration between regional workforce development service areas to better serve business throughout the region.
- Strong regional economic development and encourages public bodies to financially support such regional efforts.

Budget & Taxes

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce supports a competitive and fair tax climate that promotes and fosters economic growth through private sector expansion. The Chamber encourages:

- A tax climate that promotes the region as fair and competitive for business and protects businesses from targeted taxes on one sector of business, regardless of size or industry.
- Structural reform of the tax system to reduce the reliance on property taxes to fund education and governmental entities.
- Enhancing the overall business environment in Illinois the State by making timely payments of financial obligations to all vendors.
- The State to advance annually a truly balanced budget that relies on realistic revenue projections, pays all bills in a timely manner, and uses accounting standards and practices that are transparent and straightforward.
- An equitable resolution of State pension and retirement issues that creates a long-term, financially sustainable solution.
- Reform to reduce the deficit and develop a realistic plan to balance the State budget.
- Fair pension reform to develop new, more affordable retiree health care plans for all State workers that are comparable to the benefits available to taxpayers in the private sector.
- Coordinating efforts among the business community, local governments, and our Congressional delegation to maximize Federal funding for the region.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The Aurora Regional Chamber of Commerce believes transportation and infrastructure are vital to the region's economic growth. As such, we support improvements to our region's transportation infrastructure, including the Interstate and State highways, railroads, and municipal airport. The Chamber supports:

- An adequate and dedicated funding source for infrastructure construction and maintenance that is fair and equitable throughout the State.

- An adequate and dedicated funding source for local infrastructure maintenance and construction.
- City and County policies that encourage the development of the technological infrastructure needed for a modern community.

Labor & Employment Law

The Aurora Regional Chamber recognizes the current and future workforce challenges facing our region's employers. It provides a collective voice on behalf of member businesses regarding employment law legislation on the municipal, State, and Federal level.

The Chamber supports legislation that enables businesses to hire and maintain a skilled workforce. The Chamber urges:

- Worker's compensation reform to make costs in line with neighboring states.
- The ability of market forces to set wages and benefit levels. We encourage workers to further job skill levels to increase value in the workplace and increase their salary levels.

Healthcare & Insurance Reform

The Aurora Regional Chamber recognizes that most healthcare coverage is provided by employers. To make it easier for employers and their employees to afford the healthcare coverage they need and the effective quality they deserve, the Chamber supports action to accomplish these goals.

- The Chamber encourages change in the employee health plans and Medicare reimbursement structures that give greater personal incentives to help manage healthcare costs by introducing market forces as a factor to help control expenses.
- The Chamber opposes coverage mandates and attempts to dictate policy provisions within an employer's healthcare plan.

Hospitality & Entertainment

The Chamber appreciates the crucial role travel and tourism plays in our community, our State, and our country's economy. We support efforts to revitalize growth in all sectors of the industry and oppose efforts to cripple segments of the business community through unfair means.

- The Chamber opposes gaming expansion that would negatively impact the local facility and community.
- The Chamber encourages initiatives that will help the Aurora region secure a larger share of the multi-million dollar regional tourism industry.