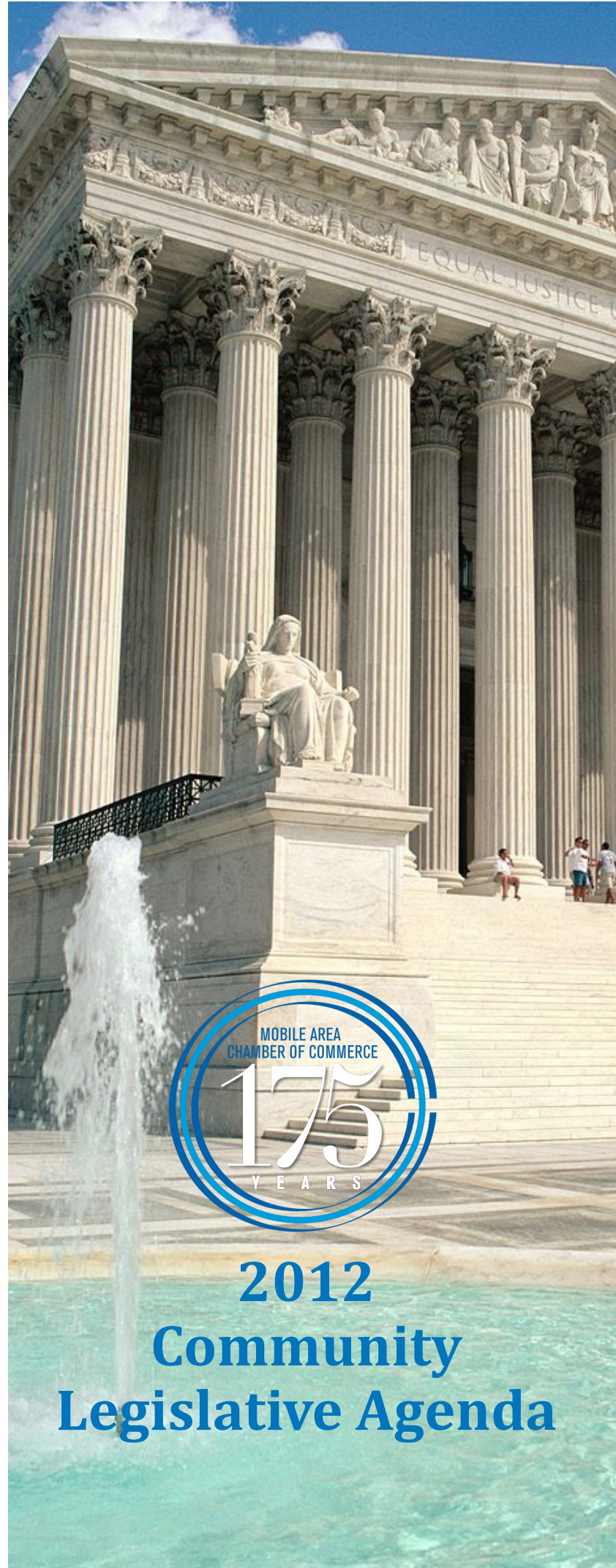


Policy Statements

- Support fair and equitable tax reform to stimulate business growth and development; ensure that taxes and tax reform are applied fairly, without levying a disproportionate burden on individual segments of Alabama's economy.
- Support the review and repeal of unnecessary regulations and seek greater reform, efficiency and accountability in federal, state and local government.
- In order to preserve jobs and economic growth, remove barriers that can derail energy projects and reduce overly burdensome regulations that create uncertainty and stifle growth.
- Support existing eminent domain statutes to maintain economic development and quality of life initiatives, such as new manufacturing facilities and industrial/commercial parks as well as the revitalization of blighted areas, public housing and green space.
- Support efforts to protect an employer's right to ensure a safe workplace.
- Support infrastructure project funding and legislative initiatives that improve the prospect of future economic success, including improvements to the port, airport, rail, water, sewer and industrial site infrastructure as well as strategic transportation infrastructure needs.
- Seek a fair and level distribution of fuel tax dollars that will allow for adequate funding of critical road and bridge infrastructure projects in southwest Alabama.
- Support the creation of a state-appointed board of directors to oversee the Alabama Department of Transportation.
- Advocate for stable sources of adequate funding for all state-directed public education initiatives that will ensure an increase in student achievement and a fundamentally well-rounded education.
- Continue to strengthen strategic workforce partnerships developed through the Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council Region 9, Mobile County School System and Bishop State Community College to create seamless, demand-driven education and training services that produce a highly prepared and competitive workforce for our region.
- Support fair trade initiatives and agreements designed to increase access to global markets, including reducing trade and tourism restrictions with Cuba.
- Reform federal immigration policy to strengthen our national security, including increasing protection of our borders, while providing a supplemental workforce for American businesses and industry; ensure the continuity and expansion of H-1B, H-2B and L-1 visas for professionals and highly-valued workers.
- Support the efforts of the Alabama Gulf Coast Regional Sewer Supply District to build a more resilient and efficient infrastructure that provides reliable, cost-effective wastewater treatment in support of the long-term needs of the region.
- Seek to protect the current worker classification of independent contractor as an integral part of the courier and real estate industries.
- Simplify and reform the 1901 Constitution of the state of Alabama, including the opportunity for counties to choose "home rule" and provide the governor with line-item veto powers.
- Seek support for legislation that allows for the protection of manufacturers from frivolous plaintiff lawsuits due to noise and/or other minor nuisances.
- Seek an equitable resolution on the Medicare wage index issue so hospitals in the region will be fairly reimbursed for the services they provide to the Medicare population.



2012 Community Legislative Agenda

The members of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce identified the following issues, policies and appropriations as fundamental to Alabama's progress. Respondents believe addressing these issues will help to build additional jobs and a more positive business climate in the Mobile area.

Critical Issues

■ To relieve growing congestion, seek increased state and federal support and funding to address **transportation infrastructure needs** including a western Mobile bypass, a Mobile River bridge, an intermodal container transfer facility (ICTF), and completion of the four laning of U.S. Highways 98 and 45; support the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

■ Advocate for **adequate federal funding levels for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District** to support annual operations and maintenance dredging of the Mobile harbor and channels, which is necessary to maintaining federally authorized channel depths that serve area shippers and manufacturers using the Port of Mobile and Alabama's inland waterways.

■ Seek support for **more innovative educational opportunities, college preparatory and career-ready programs** into the existing public school structure.

■ Advocate that Alabama's portion of BP economic recovery funds and clean water act fines be **allocated to Mobile and Baldwin counties** for the necessary rebuilding of coastal economies and environmental assets following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

■ Seek legislation to establish state-guaranteed, zero-interest **small business loans** available immediately following a federally declared natural disaster, such as hurricane, flooding or tornado, to bridge the time until insurance claims are paid and other disaster relief funds or financial assistance can be acquired.

■ In the November 2012 state-wide referendum, support the continued conservation and protection of undeveloped lands within Alabama through the **re-authorization and continued funding of the Forever Wild program**.

■ Support a **comprehensive federal energy policy** increasing the supply of energy in a manner that is safe and protective of the environment, promotes comprehensive energy conservation and encourages research and development of clean and alternative energy sources.

■ **Lift the moratorium on offshore drilling**, close regulatory gaps in safety and incident response on offshore drilling and production installations and platforms; support additional Gulf leases; support giving Gulf Coast states that permit offshore drilling a greater share of royalties oil companies pay to operate in U.S. waters.

■ Support a **comprehensive, federal broadband policy** that fosters public-private partnerships, spurs private sector investment and recognizes the robust and competitive broadband marketplace; investigate and advocate for a local connection to national high-speed Internet access.

■ Support efforts to maintain **federal military contracts** with Mobile area-based companies, particularly Austal USA's next-generation Littoral Combat Ships and Joint High Speed Vessels for the U.S. Department of Defense.

■ Support and encourage **balanced and inclusive pro-business practices** and procedures that encourage development and growth within the city of Mobile and Mobile County; **encourage fair and expeditious permitting practices** for both local and out-of-town investors.

Legislative Issues

■ Seek legislation to encourage market-driven property insurance reforms in order to increase the availability of **property insurance coverage at competitive pricing** so individuals and businesses can find reasonable and available protection for their homes and businesses.

■ To encourage downtown and urban revitalization investments, **seek state economic development tax incentives** for: 1) the preservation or development of historical buildings; 2) works of art in a cultural district; 3) entrepreneurial startups within the downtown core and; 4) investments in businesses in impoverished and low-income communities in the downtown core area and/or central business district.

■ Support a **state sales tax exemption on aircraft parts** used in reconfiguring or maintaining commercial aircraft so Alabama may be competitive with other states in seeking additional aircraft industry work.

■ Support legislation establishing more **accountability for the sale of metal products** to secondary metal recyclers.

■ Support legislation to allow for the **establishment of Entertainment Districts** wherein Alcoholic Beverage Control Board rules could be adapted to allow outdoor festivals and sidewalk dining.

■ Oppose federal legislation to mandate performance standards in **oil spill removal plans** for tank and non-tank vessels in excess of 400 Gross Registered Tons.

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce Staff

Winthrop M. Hallett III, President

Robert L. Chappelle, Executive Vice President

Community & Governmental Affairs

Ginny K. Russell, Vice President

Patty Howell, Director - Regional Affairs

Shayla Jones Beaco, Director - Local Affairs

The Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce serves as a progressive advocate for business needs to promote the Mobile area's economic well being.