



Naugatuck Chamber
driving business to business

THE NAUGATUCK CHAMBER'S 2019 LEGISLATIVE AND REGIONAL AGENDA



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SEARCHING FOR FISCAL STABILITY

Connecticut begins 2019 with a new governor and a new General Assembly, but with the same lingering fiscal crisis that has plagued the state for a decade. The year began with the state facing a \$4.6 billion deficit in the next two fiscal years.

In the past two years, the state finally approved some key policy goals our Chamber has long advocated for — including an enforceable constitutional spending cap; an annual bonding cap and requiring the legislature to vote on state employee union contracts — but more remains to be done to create the stable and predictable fiscal climate so desperately sought by businesses and individual taxpayers. The Chamber continues to support the **Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth**, and we encourage members of our legislative delegation to fully consider the recommendations the commission presented to the legislature last year.



Director of Public Policy
DAVID KRECHEVSKY
Waterbury Regional Chamber

Below are the Chamber's **2019 State Policy Objectives**; on the back are specific changes and programs we support, including those at the regional and local levels.

2019 STATE POLICY OBJECTIVES



1. Taxing & Spending

Reduce the cost of government by controlling state employee wage and pension costs; create tax policies that encourage business investment and job creation; replace collective bargaining on state employee contracts with administrative branch negotiation & keep required approval by legislative branch



2. Labor & Employment

Develop policies that promote creating and retaining jobs and reduce administrative costs; adequately fund, but without bonding, demonstrably successful workforce development/training programs



3. Education

Support equitable funding for public institutions of higher education, while working to reduce costs and improve efficiencies; create a balanced approach for public, private, for-profit & nonprofit post-secondary schools



4. Manufacturing

Prioritize funding for STEM/trade education and training; adequately fund programs that support manufacturing jobs & incumbent-worker training



5. Healthcare

Support policies that improve quality and access to care while reducing the cost of care; prioritize funding for mental health & addiction services



6. Economic Development & Tourism

Support transportation-oriented development initiatives; continue to support Brownfields remediation efforts; support jobs & enhance tourism revenue by properly funding state marketing efforts



7. Energy & Environment

Adequately fund programs that help reduce energy usage and cost; support remediation and redevelopment of brownfields



8. Regulatory Reform

Reduce or eliminate unnecessary/outdated regulations to promote business development & job creation; eliminate piecemeal approach to requirements that drag out permitting & approval of projects



9. Transportation & Infrastructure

Prioritize & fund infrastructure maintenance and repair projects; complete improvements to the Waterbury rail line

NAUGATUCK CHAMBER'S 2019 STATE AND REGIONAL AGENDA

Taxing & Spending

- Oppose new taxes and tax increases;
- Support tax policies that encourage investment in job-creation and apprenticeship;
- Create tax incentives for STEM students at Connecticut colleges and universities to accept employment in Connecticut upon graduation;
- Support replacing collective bargaining for state employee contracts with administrative branch negotiation & retain required approval votes by both legislative chambers.

Labor & Workforce Development

- Oppose expansion of workers' compensation benefits;
- Oppose increases to the state's minimum wage;
- Oppose mandating paid family & medical leave;
- Maintain funding for apprentice training & development;
- Support a review of and updates to apprenticeship hiring ratios;
- Support and fund demonstrably successful workforce development & training programs;
- Support "do no harm approach" to reforming the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund;
- Support requiring state contractors to hire Connecticut residents first.

Education

- Maintain funding for vocational-technical schools and for advanced manufacturing programs at Naugatuck Valley Community College and other community colleges;
- Align school curricula with industry-sector workforce needs;
- Support efforts to prioritize & promote Allied Health four-year degree programs at UConn Waterbury;
- Fully fund the Educational Cost-Sharing grants to school districts.

Manufacturing

- Maintain funding for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund;
- Support initiatives of the Legislature's Manufacturing Caucus.

Healthcare

- Convene a group of stakeholders to work with the state to produce a comprehensive plan to address the exponential growth in the Medicaid program;
- Establish a date to sunset the hospital provider tax and provide full funding of Medicaid reimbursement obligations to ensure financial viability of our hospitals;
- Use Waterbury's model for healthcare spending reform to save on state retiree healthcare costs;
- Support a two-year moratorium on new insurance mandates.

Economic Development & Tourism

- Support Naugatuck's efforts to revitalize its downtown;
- Support downtown Waterbury revitalization efforts, including Main Street Waterbury's efforts to revitalize the central business district;
- Support The Arts and Culture Collaborative of the Waterbury Region;
- Support Watertown and Oakville economic development efforts to revitalize its downtown.

Energy & Environment

- Support the Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Project and protect the region's waterways;
- Support continued state investment in Brownfields remediation, and work with our federal delegation to ensure federal funding is available;
- Restore the \$165 million removed from the state's energy efficiency programs;
- Support expediting environmental permits required for business starts and expansion.

Regulatory Reform

- Institute reciprocity of licensure in Connecticut for professions and trades licensed by other states;
- Support a two-year suspension of costly unfunded state mandates;
- Support reducing/eliminating unnecessary or outdated regulations and streamlining permitting & approval processes
- Support prohibiting the state from altering approved contract terms without renegotiation.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- Support Naugatuck's transportation-oriented development plans and proposed rail improvements for the Port of Naugatuck;
- Support developing a Multi-Modal Transportation Center and improvements to the Waterbury Rail Branch Line;
- Support scheduled maintenance & repairs for the I-84/Route 8 Mixmaster;
- Maintain funding for evening bus service in Waterbury, and approve matching funds needed to support bus service on Lakewood Road and in the city's South End;
- If tolls are approved, support:
 - Limiting the number and location of highway tolls;
 - Requiring all highway toll receipts to be placed in the transportation fund "lock box";
 - Offsetting toll revenue with a corresponding reduction in the motor fuels tax, and
 - Allowing toll exemptions or tax credits for first responders and medical caregivers.

For information, contact

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Watertown Oakville Chamber
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