



Vice Chairman Public Policy
WILLIAM J. PALOMBA
Marketing Manager
Blasius Chevrolet Cadillac

SEARCHING FOR FISCAL STABILITY

Connecticut begins 2020 with many of the same lingering fiscal issues that have plagued the state for more than a decade. While the state is on track to end Fiscal Year 2020 with a projected \$84.3 million surplus, the state Office of Fiscal Analysis reports we face billion-dollar budget deficits from 2022 through 2024, even with General Fund revenue increasing by \$2.53 billion over the next two years.

The Waterbury Regional Chamber and its affiliates, the Naugatuck Chamber and the Watertown Oakville Chamber, object to the state continuing to add expensive programs that increase the burdens on business — especially small businesses. Imposing a paid family & medical leave program and steadily increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour over the next four years while also reducing the pass-through entity tax credit harms the businesses the state is counting on to create new jobs, making it less likely those jobs will materialize.

Below are the Chamber's **2020 State Policy Objectives**; on the back are specific changes and programs we support, including those at the regional and local levels.



Director of Public Policy
DAVID KRECHEVSKY
Waterbury Regional Chamber

2020 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 & Workforce Development

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 & redevelopment of brownfields; adopt any additional changes recommended by the Transfer Act Working Group



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 2020 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;
- Repeal the state's minimum wage increases and reject proposals to eliminate the tipped wage;
- Repeal mandate for paid family & medical leave;
- Support a review of/updates to apprenticeship hiring ratios;
- Support funding demonstrably successful workforce development & training programs;
- Support adding representation from Greater Waterbury to the Governor's Workforce Development Council;
- 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 promote Allied Health four-year degree program at UConn Waterbury;
- Fully fund the Educational Cost-Sharing grants to school districts;
- Support requiring greater transparency for the Dalio education partnership.

Manufacturing

- Maintain funding for the Manufacturing Innovation Fund;
- Maintain funding for apprentice training & development;
- Support expanding the apprenticeship tax credit to C corporations and pass-through entities;
- Support initiatives of the Legislature's Manufacturing Caucus;
- Support initiatives to promote STEM/manufacturing careers, especially to students in elementary & middle schools.
- Support working with the CT Manufacturing Collaborative to develop ways to support manufacturers in the Connecticut;
- Support the state Chief Manufacturing Officer's efforts to expand promotion of and training for manufacturing careers in the state.

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;
- Support measures that strengthen Connecticut hospitals and health systems and recognize their vital importance to the economy & health of local communities;
- Approve the hospital provider tax compromise and establish a date to sunset the tax;
- Support fully funding Medicaid reimbursement and increase provider reimbursement rates;
- Support requiring the state to strictly follow federal Medicaid reimbursement rules & guidelines and reject cost-settling on a "fee for service" rate-based reimbursement system;
- Maintain current funding levels for behavioral health care and oppose further reductions;

- Use Waterbury's model for healthcare spending reform to reduce state retiree healthcare costs;
- Support a two-year moratorium on new insurance mandates.

Economic Development & Tourism

- Support downtown Waterbury revitalization efforts, including Main Street Waterbury's efforts to revitalize the central business district;
- Support Naugatuck's efforts to revitalize its downtown;
- Support economic development efforts to revitalize Watertown Oakville downtown;
- Maintain the state's investment in the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to ensure quality counseling & technical support remains available to small businesses;
- Support The Arts & Culture Collaborative of the Waterbury Region.

Energy & Environment

- Support continued state investment in Brownfields remediation, and work with our Congressional 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;
- Adopt any new changes to the Transfer Act recommended by the Transfer Act Working Group;
- Support the Waterbury Naugatuck River Greenway Project and protect the region's waterways.

Regulatory Reform

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

Transportation & Infrastructure

- 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;
- Support Naugatuck's transportation-oriented development plans and proposed rail improvements for the Port of Naugatuck, including purchasing new train passenger cars;
- Prohibit diverting toll, user fee, or gas tax revenue from the transportation fund "lock box";
- If approved, support:
 - Limiting the number and location of highway tolls;
 - Offsetting toll revenue with a corresponding reduction in the motor fuels tax, and
 - Allowing toll/user fee exemptions or tax credits for first responders and medical caregivers;
 - Providing waivers for in-district and out-of-district school transportation, as well as for contractors of state DCF, DDS and DMAS.

For information, contact
Waterbury Regional Chamber Public Policy Director,
Dave Krechevsky at 203-757-0701