



**Cincinnati USA**  
**Regional Chamber**

**2011 Policy Agenda**



## TO OUR MEMBERS:

In 2011, **new political landscapes** have emerged at the state and national levels. In Ohio, a new Governor was elected and new leadership has stepped into both houses of the General Assembly. In the U.S. Congress, a new party now controls the House of Representatives and local Congressman, John Boehner, is Speaker of the House. In Cincinnati, City Council will begin to implement a new budget and hold elections in the Fall. In the next two years, Ohio and the nation are poised to move in a new direction.

**Proactive in our efforts** to influence the direction government takes, we have worked with you, our members, to develop a comprehensive policy agenda representing the highest priorities of the region's business community. The Chamber's agenda is focused on issues that have the highest impact on the ease and cost of doing business. From taxes and transportation infrastructure to environmental and regulatory issues, our advocacy team will be working to ensure this region is one of the best places in the world to do business.

In order to **maximize the voice of the Chamber**, our advocacy team will focus on legislation and policy in Congress, the State of Ohio, Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati. We will collaborate with key community partners in Northern Kentucky and Southeast Indiana, as well as organizations working closely with local political subdivisions outside of Hamilton County, to promote other critical business issues.

The Chamber also collaborated with the eight other Ohio metropolitan Chambers and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce to release "Redesigning Ohio: **Transforming Government** into a 21st Century Institution." Working over the past year with national and local government reform leaders, the report issues a set of recommendations aimed at changing the way Ohio governs. To access a copy of this report, please visit [cincinnati-chamber.com](http://cincinnati-chamber.com).

Responsible for taking the voice of our Southwest Ohio business community to the Statehouse and Congress, our Government Affairs team is giving you a concise statement of our top policy priorities. **Hold us accountable**, surely, but also come aboard and help us. While this agenda represents the top priorities currently identified, we always want to know how upcoming legislation and policies are affecting you.

For nearly six months, key Chamber volunteers worked with our Government Affairs staff to identify the important issues addressed here, and they will continue to help us in 2011 as we work to **advocate for business**. Thank you to our Government Affairs Council and Committees for their help in developing this agenda.

Again, we **appreciate our members' support** of the Chamber and thank you for your help in making Cincinnati USA one of the world's favorite American business centers. Turn to this report for understanding, share it with your colleagues and friends, download it online at the Chamber's Advocacy Action Center, [cincinnati-chamber.com/advocacy](http://cincinnati-chamber.com/advocacy), and come back to it throughout the year frequently as the Statehouse and Congress introduce and vote on important legislation.



**George H. Vincent**  
Chair, Board of Directors



**Ellen G. van der Horst**  
President and CEO

## INTRODUCTION

As of January 2011, the national unemployment rate was 9.4 percent. Ohio's unemployment rate was above the national average at 9.6 percent and the Cincinnati-Middletown MSA just under at 9.2 percent. Clearly our local, state and national economies need to see dramatic improvement in order to get employment, consumer spending, and business revenues back on the road to recovery.

With businesses facing this negative economic headwind, our elected officials should focus on creating the best environment for companies to produce and compete globally. Most importantly, the efforts of government should create the best conditions for the private sector to grow jobs.

While the Cincinnati USA region has significant economic assets - prime location, the number of corporate headquarters and, affordable cost of living among them - the pressures contributing to the national recession are definitely present here. As one of the State's largest metropolitan areas, Cincinnati USA's economic health is vital to the success of the state. The Chamber's mission is to position the Cincinnati USA region as a global leader in business and government advocacy is a key strategy in achieving that goal.

In order to capture our place as one of the world's favorite American business centers, the Chamber will advocate for a business friendly climate that encourages investment, enhances business growth and cultivates a talented workforce with:

- Policies that strengthen the role of America's small businesses as the engine of economic growth, including providing access to capital and keeping regulatory burdens low;
- Tax policies that keep America competitive internationally and reward success;
- Transportation policies investing in the efficient movement of goods and people, fostering economic development;

- Healthcare policies that advance sustainable health institutions and foster an environment conducive to innovation and research;
- Labor policies protecting the rights of employers to manage employees and respond to market conditions;
- Energy and environmental policies incentivizing innovation consistent with market-based principles and sound science;
- Workforce policies that align targeted industry clusters with job skills and qualifications needed to meet market demands;
- Education policies that prepare children and adults to effectively enter and re-enter the workforce;

The Chamber recognizes it cannot do this work alone. Working with community partners, the Chamber will take the lead on driving the conversation and advancing our policy priorities. In turn, the Chamber will also assist partner community organizations as they move other important issues forward.



## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

*Central to a robust economy is public policy that stimulates innovation, helps commercialize invention, supports start-up and small businesses and encourages business attraction. The Chamber will be outspoken in its support of policies that support business investment and protect and enhance the interests of all business enterprises.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Support and strengthen the Ohio Third Frontier program.
- Support policies dedicated to aid and grow Ohio's minority businesses.
- Support federal policies that provide greater access to capital.
- Support additional funding for the SBA Recovery Loan program.
- Support a federal payroll tax holiday.

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- Federal efforts to increase the minimum wage.
- Federal or state efforts to reform small-business liability, specifically punitive damages caps.



## TAXES

*Low tax rates allow for business expansion and investment in human resources. This is especially critical as the economy continues to rebound and businesses begin re-hiring. Therefore, the Chamber will support tax and spending policies that stimulate growth, innovation and job creation.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Support permanent extension of the 2001 and 2003 federal tax relief package.
- Support permanent extension of the federal Research and Experimentation (R&D) tax credit.
- Support final implementation of the 2005 Ohio state tax reforms.
- Support the lowering of Ohio's estate tax.
- Support federal reauthorization of the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC).

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- State legislation mandating or incentivizing sunsets or means tests for local property tax rollbacks (PTRs).



## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

*Transportation infrastructure is an important asset for all businesses. Whether used for shipping goods across the country or transporting the workforce, the nation's airports, bridges, roads, ports, and rails are at the heart of America's industrial and commercial activity. In 2011, legislators and policy makers should take the opportunity to address the country's infrastructure needs, identifying a strategy to invest in a 21st Century transportation network.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Support Congressional reauthorization of a federal six-year transportation bill that includes funding for the Brent Spence Bridge and investments to expand multi-modal freight capacity.
- Collaborate with local, state, and federal leaders to expand daily flight service at the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.
- Support federal and State of Ohio rail investments to improve the efficiency of Ohio's freight service.
- Work with state legislators on the development and direction of Ohio's 2012-2013 Transportation Budget to ensure that our regional priorities and projects are addressed by this two-year operating bill.

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- New federal and state funding methods for transportation projects.
- Changes in federal approach to funding transportation projects with congressional earmarks.
- Federal and state transportation policies that encourage investment in city centers.



## HEALTHCARE

*The Chamber will monitor the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) to ensure the legislation lowers the healthcare burden on employers and increases access and affordability within the healthcare system. Additionally, the Chamber will support healthcare policies that advance sustainable health institutions and foster an environment conducive to innovation and research.*

### **KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS**

- Support repeal of the 1099 Form reporting requirement contained in federal healthcare reform package.
- Oppose any new federal or state healthcare related employer mandates.

### **POLICIES TO WATCH**

- Monitor implementation of the state run health insurance exchange to allow small businesses the ability to purchase healthcare insurance at an affordable rate.
- Efforts in the Ohio General Assembly to reintroduce Hospital Assessment Fees.





## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

*The age of command-and-control regulation is over. Under this well-established regulatory scheme, businesses face costly directives from governments to achieve what in many cases they could achieve cheaper and more efficiently. Governments need to become more flexible, giving businesses trusted information and effective choices when regulating. The Chamber will be a leader in federal, state and local environmental policy advocacy efforts, supporting energy and environmental policies that reduce unnecessary regulation and incentivize innovation consistent with market-based principles and sound science.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Advocate for Congressional legislation blocking USEPA regulation of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- Oppose further lowering of USEPA's 2008 national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone and particulate matter.
- Support repeal of the City of Cincinnati's Environmental Justice Ordinance.

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- State initiatives that speed and encourage brownfield redevelopment of both industrial and commercial properties.



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*Basic legislative resources that establish funding, policies and programs to address state and regional workforce challenges are sorely missing. At both a state and national level, these structures are long overdue and this important topic must be a priority. Strong existing institutions, like local workforce investment boards, should be maintained and strengthened so that programs are efficient, affordable and provide the workplace skills needed by citizens and businesses.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Support Congressional reauthorization of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
- Support the streamlining and coordination of the employer services of the region's tri-state public workforce system, reducing or eliminating the number of wrong door entry services to employers.

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- Federal and State of Ohio funding for incumbent worker training.



## EDUCATION

*Businesses count on a qualified workforce to successfully operate. The Chamber will support education policies, from birth to career, that prepare children and adults to effectively enter and re-enter the labor market.*

### KEY 2011 ACTION ITEMS

- Support the federal renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind).
- Support the implementation of Ohio's Race to the Top.
- Support state funding for early childhood education.

### POLICIES TO WATCH

- Incentives for Ohio school districts to pursue a portfolio of schools strategy.



## Government Affairs Council and Committees

### **Karen R. Bowman**

*Deloitte*

Chair, Government Affairs Council

### **Education & Workforce Development**

**Joe Hummel**, Chair

*Allied Construction Industries*

**Ross Meyer**, Co-Chair

*Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network*

### **Energy & Environment**

**Dick Brewer**, Chair

*Duke Energy Co.*

**Jeff Boyle**, Co-Chair

*Environmental Science Associates PLC*

### **Healthcare**

**Melissa Saladonis**, Chair

*Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical  
Center*

**Jon Fishpaw**, Co-Chair

*Catholic Health Partners*

### **Policy & Ballot Issues Committee**

**Jim Mahon**, Chair

*Compass Group, Inc.*

**Akiva Freeman**, Co-Chair

*CresaPartners, Inc.*

### **Tax & Finance**

**Dick Taulbee**, Chair

*Western & Southern Financial Group*

**Lee Stautberg**, Co-Chair

*Dinsmore & Shohl LLP*

### **Transportation**

**Mike Battles**, Chair

*Woolpert, Inc.*

**Staci Dennison**, Co-Chair

*Cincinnati Museum Center*

## Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber Government Affairs Staff

### **Matt Davis**

Vice President

[mdavis@cincinnatiachamber.com](mailto:mdavis@cincinnatiachamber.com)

### **Tom Ewing**

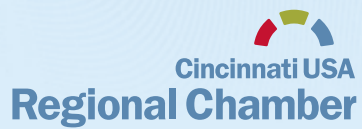
Senior Legislative and Policy Analyst

[tewing@cincinnatiachamber.com](mailto:tewing@cincinnatiachamber.com)

### **Jason Kershner**

Legislative and Policy Analyst

[jkershner@cincinnatiachamber.com](mailto:jkershner@cincinnatiachamber.com)



[www.cincinnati-chamber.com/advocacy](http://www.cincinnati-chamber.com/advocacy)

300 Carew Tower  
441 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-2812  
513.579.3100

