

Chamber Legislative Agenda

Summary of Function: The Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce plays a critical role in advocating for pro-business legislation at the state, local, and federal levels. The Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber develops a thoughtful legislative agenda to publicly publish its priorities. The Chamber uses a systematic approach to identify and advocate priorities, including leveraging grassroots groups, a formal government affairs committee and legislative advocacy forms. The Chamber stands ready to support legislation through in person visits, calls, letters of support and other means necessary to obtain a favorable outcome for the continued success of our member businesses and local economy.

Economic Development

- Support incentives, proven to encourage businesses to invest and expand their operations in Bulloch County.
- Support extension of job tax credits for businesses creating rural remote positions.
- Support local and state government providing appropriate funding mechanisms, such as Tax Allocation Districts.
- Support increased funding for Georgia Historic Tax credits, allowing unused credits to be repurposed.
- Enhance the DCA's Downtown Low Interest Revolving Loan Program, particularly its qualifying standards.
- Encourage companies receiving public dollars to utilize local vendors/contractors/subcontractors.
- Support legislation that waives certain fees for start-up businesses to expand our entrepreneurial footprint.
- Support and encourage business incubator developments.
- Advocate for local and state government to adopt business-friendly zoning and ordinances.
- Position Chamber to be convener of community and regional stakeholders for purposes of strategic planning.
- Support local legislation to create a Public Facilities Authority for the City of Statesboro.
- Support capital projects that enhance economic development, using SPLOST funds.

Education & Workforce

- Support expansion of early learning access and affordability of quality rated childcare and Georgia PreK.
- Support early (Birth-toddler) literacy efforts of the Bulloch County Schools and other organizations.
- Support curriculum modification to ensure students are prepared at an early age with skills they will need to be competitive in the workforce. Those skills include computer science, data fluency, coding and cybersecurity, partnering with local business and industry to identify future job requirements and emerging skill sets.
- Support programs that address learning loss, encouraging regular, formative assessments for K-12 students.
- Support increased student services such as counselors, school social workers, psychologists, nurses and healthcare facilities in K-12 schools.
- Support funding for K-12 school-based instructional technology infrastructure and resources to increase education and graduation outcomes.
- Encourage CTAE pathway alignment and equitable access to meet talent demands, working with business and industry partners.
- Support expansion of CTAE pathways in cybersecurity and entrepreneurship.
- Support options in Bulloch County Schools that address the different needs of students, such as career academies, work-based learning, apprenticeships and internships.
- Promote policies that increase awareness and access to higher ed options, as well as the return on investment of a degree program based on anticipated income.
- Support partnership among families, schools, and the business community to promote and prepare local students and graduates to fill the demand for a highly skilled, competitive workforce.
- Promote programs such as Department of Labor services, QuickStart and Worksource, using current labor market to meet local talent demands.
- Encourage research at the state level to review the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula to ensure equitable access for Bulloch County Schools.
- Allow Bulloch County Schools to self-fund healthcare plans for non-certified staff equal to state coverage.
- Support increased caps for reserve funds for Bulloch County Schools.
- Support increased state funding for non-certified staff of Bulloch County Schools.
- Support capital projects that enhance educational opportunities, using ESPLOST funds.
- Support locally funded codes to support the pay gap between retirement and target pay of Bulloch County Schools.
- Ensure the protection and viability of the Teacher Retirement System.

- Encourage support of Ogeechee Technical College's capital projects like the automotive and EV expansion on the main campus, included in the TCSG Commissioner's budget.
- Support reauthorization of strategic reserves (carryforward) authority legislation (Joint USG/TCSG agency bill.)
- Support Small Cap Request of Georgia Southern University's HVAC upgrades on Swainsboro Campus.
- Support full funding for the USG's budget priorities, including enrollment growth, maintenance and operations, and health insurance increases.

Infrastructure

- Support advancement of city and county transportation infrastructure, using TSPLOST funds.
- Support development and growth of local public transportation like Statesboro Area Transit (SAT.)
- Support continued strategic investment of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to Georgia's transportation network.
- Support the expansion of fiberoptics throughout the county.
- Support funding for utility infrastructure for the Statesboro Bulloch County Airport to attract business and industry opportunities.
- Support funding for septage pre-treatment facility in Bulloch County.
- Support funding for interim small package plant for wastewater treatment.
- Support joint request of Bulloch County, City of Statesboro, and Georgia Southern University for Lanier Drive widening project through GDOT.
- Support funding mechanisms for natural gas expansion.

Water, Energy & Environment

- Support effective stormwater management systems, policies and local ordinances that improve water quality and mitigate negative environmental impacts.
- Monitor the statewide water planning process, so the plan protects water resources for economic development.
- Support the continuation of improvements in the permitting process so permits are issued at the speed of business.
- Ensure EPD is responsive, providing timely guidance, facilitation and coordination of permit review and issuance to businesses.
- Advocate for a clean, safe, reliable, affordable and diverse energy portfolio in Georgia.

Healthcare

- Support wellness initiatives and disease prevention to control healthcare costs.
- Support local hospitals and emergency medical providers by requesting improved reimbursement levels for Medicaid providers.
- Support policies and incentives that promote the development of a talented and qualified workforce across the healthcare field.
- Support the continuation of the Rural Hospital Tax Credit and Georgia Heart Tax Program.
- Support funding for crisis stabilization (mental health) units in hospitals.
- Monitor the impact of direct payment programs on hospitals.
- Improve licensure renewal process to prevent gaps in service.

Agriculture

- Support legislative policies that support the prosperity of rural agriculture business and industry.
- Support comprehensive strategies to promote and market agriculture as our number 1 industry.
- Support federal visa and immigration reform to access global talent for the agriculture field.
- Support refugee hiring to fill critical demands of agriculture related job vacancies.

Housing

- Support incentives for investments to revitalize neighborhoods with distressed properties.
- Support state and local housing rehabilitation initiatives to renovate and construct affordable housing.
- Support the Georgia Chamber and Hub Chamber Council to conduct housing studies that will review and recommend local housing policies.

Public Safety

- Support funding for mental health crisis in Georgia.

- Support the Bulloch County Schools, Bulloch County Sherriff Department and Statesboro Police to maintain resource officers in each local school.
- Encourage programs in local schools to connect students with county-wide safety resources.