

Bartlesville Regional Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda – 2016

FEDERAL ISSUES

Water Supply

Whereas reliable water supply is necessary for continued regional growth and in times of drought, support Congressional action to secure affordable additional water supply on Lakes Hulah and Copan and authorize or waive flood control reallocation studies on Lakes Hulah and Copan to allow the City of Bartlesville to secure up to a 5% reallocation of flood control to water supply on both lakes as recommended in 2007 USACE “Bartlesville Water Supply and Conveyance Study.”

Energy

Whereas fossil fuels are the lifeblood of the U.S. economy and necessary for daily existence, support all efforts to roll back regulations, which hamper the ability to explore, produce and market oil & gas resources including the exploration and production on federal lands.

Environmental Protection Agency

Continue to oppose the EPA’s proposed “Waters of the US” rule, which broadens its jurisdiction to include tributaries of navigable waterways and could place an additional 50,000 to 100,000 stream miles in Oklahoma under EPA regulation. Implementation of this rule will have dire consequences for private property rights and the freedom of property owners to enjoy, develop and make use of their property. Call on Congress to reaffirm its original definition of ‘navigable waters’ in the Clean Water Act.

Federal Regulation Reform

Support Congressional action to reform federal agencies’ rulemaking authority by requiring a standardized, comprehensive cost/benefit analysis and total economic impact of rules/regulations. Also, require Congressional approval or rejection of proposed rules/regulations.

Taxation

Support comprehensive reform of the federal tax code to reduce the overall tax burden on individuals and businesses, including a reduction in corporate tax rates.

So that taxation is equal for all industries, support an industry-blind tax code to spur economic growth and opportunity.

Health Care

Because free markets are essential to providing high-quality, abundant, affordable and accessible health care: support the repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act with reforms that allow free insurance markets to offer a range of policies with:

- Affordable premiums and deductibles
- Wider networks and choices in health care providers

Support block granting Medicaid funds to individual states with waivers from federal regulations to achieve better health care and lower costs for their citizens.

Transportation

Support continued funding for completion of critical improvements to U.S. Highway 60 east and west of Bartlesville.

Federal Immigration Laws

In the interest of national security, the fiscal health of state and federal governments, and the rule of law, support stringent enforcement of existing immigration laws and border security.

Internal Revenue Service

Support Congressional action to halt IRS proposal to create an optional filing for nonprofits to report SSNs of donors who give over \$250 in a given year.

STATE ISSUES

Transportation

Support continued improvements to U.S. Highway 60 east and west of Bartlesville, particularly those included in the ODOT 2011-2018 Construction Work Plan.

Taxation

Oppose the increasing of existing taxes, fees and fines as well as the creation of new taxes, fees and fines as means to raise revenue.

Economic Development

Whereas it is critical for state government to ensure return on investment, support the improved oversight and objective measurement of the effectiveness of each proposed or existing rebate, tax credit or economic incentive program.

Spending

Support the careful, objective analysis of all state funding and develop more flexibility relative to budgets and expenditures.

Revenue for Municipalities

Whereas Oklahoma is the only state in the nation that forces cities and towns to rely solely on sales tax for operational expenses, support and promote legislation to preserve and diversify revenue sources for cities and towns.

Small Business

Whereas the success of small business is vital to the local and state economy, support strict cost/benefit analysis of any proposed legislation or regulation.

Health Care

Support incentives and initiatives designed to improve service, delivery and increase access to health care.

Support retention and improvement to the Insure Oklahoma premium assistance program by maximizing state authority to direct federal funds where they are needed most.

Support retention of the Supplemental Hospital Offset Payment Program (SHOPP).

Support a long-term solution to address full reimbursement funding for Medicaid services.

Oppose state-mandated health insurance benefits.

Education

Support development and timely implementation of Oklahoma Academic Standards, which meet or exceed national models as well as standards in other states. These new standards must:

- Prepare students for the workforce
- Prepare students for college admission
- Include assessments that measure subject matter application as well as comprehension and help educators support student learning at each grade level as they progress towards graduation

Whereas an excellent classroom teacher is the most critical factor in student success; and whereas there is a teacher shortage in Oklahoma; support the following to retain and recruit excellent teachers:

- Reallocating some state education appropriations to raise salaries for classroom teachers
- Free local districts to direct state aid where needed to fill vacant positions and increase salaries for classroom teachers
- Remove the requirement for 5 years of experience and allow a certified teacher from another state to be certified in OK regardless of teaching experience.
- Provide teacher certification test results well before start of the school year

Support action to begin state aid payments to local school districts in July of each year.

Support action to allow high performing school districts more flexibility in implementing state initiatives and freedom to implement local ideas to further improve performance.

Because legislation creating the Oklahoma Promise Program (formerly known as Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program) included Career Tech; and whereas OHLAP funds have not to date included Career Tech; Support allocation for Career Tech certifications and associate degrees without requiring concurrent college enrollment.

Because improving individual student performance is the primary goal of education policy; and whereas low-income families deserve choices for the education of their children, support creation of education savings accounts, which permit families to choose alternatives to public school by using a portion of the state aid dedicated to their child's education to pay for tutoring, virtual school, higher education courses and/or to attend a private school.

Public Pension Reform

Support continued reforms to public pension systems by:

- Further reducing pension deficits
- Converting pension systems to predictable and defined employer contribution system
- Ensuring safe and secure retirements
- Treat short and long-term state employees more equitably
- Protect state and municipal bond credit ratings

Labor Reform

Whereas the municipal labor grievance system unduly favors labor over taxpayers, support legislation to allow appeal of labor grievance arbitration decisions to district court.

Whereas city councils are prevented from making final decisions on labor agreements, support legislation to allow appeal of binding interest arbitration decisions to district court while preserving the right to refer the issue to voters for final determination

Criminal Justice Reform

Whereas it is in the state's best interest to facilitate employment and Support sentencing reforms and rehabilitation programs to allow nonviolent offenders to re-enter the workforce faster and create incentives and protections for businesses to hire such individuals.

Environment

Support the creation of the Liaison Board of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Municipal League and Oklahoma Municipal Utility Providers to focus on issues between the agency and cities.

Support action to prevent ODEQ increasing rates it charges municipalities.

Whereas overreach and over regulation by ODEQ drives up the cost of water and wastewater services to all Oklahomans,

- Support action to restrict surcharges by ODEQ to those which equal the actual cost of complying with EPA core federal primacy requirements
- Support a performance and efficiency study, including a cost of services analysis, to verify the cost of EPA core primacy requirements
- Support action to implement cost-savings to further reduce surcharges

LOCAL ISSUES

Private Property Rights

Support and defend the fundamental right of owners of private property to use, improve and prosper from the sale or development of their property with limited interference from local government.

Economic Development

Support ongoing review and reform of city and county regulations related to retail and commercial development, which discourage new enterprises from locating to our community or drive new enterprises to neighboring communities.

County

Encourage Washington County Commissioners to approve a county employee medical insurance plan, which maintains current benefits at a reduced cost to county taxpayers.