



2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CHAMPIONING A COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE AND PROSPEROUS ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR NH

BIA will work for solutions to the biggest challenges to New Hampshire's continued economic success, including workforce availability, housing access and affordability, and high energy costs.

WORKFORCE

THE CHALLENGE: US Chamber reports New Hampshire has 35 available workers for every 100 open jobs, ranking among 13 states most affected by labor shortages.

SOLUTIONS:

- Support efforts to provide higher quality, more equitable educational and training opportunities across the state.
- Support efforts to increase the depth and scope of Career and Technical Education, experiential and work-based learning, apprenticeships, internships, credentialing and Career Pathways initiatives.
- Explore private and public incentives to keep students in New Hampshire, including increased financial support for the state's university and community college systems.
- Support employer efforts to recruit, hire and retain foreign-born workers with legal standing.
- Support employer efforts to capitalize on experience, facilitate an intergenerational workforce and create a culture of mentorship across sectors.
- Advocate for policies that strengthen the early childhood system, including increasing access to quality, affordable childcare to allow caregivers to return to the labor force.
- Support efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and equal opportunity in all aspects of life in New Hampshire. Fostering a welcoming environment for all individuals enhances the state's cultural fabric, economic growth, global competitiveness and prosperity.
- Support efforts to recruit, hire, support and retain employees with diverse backgrounds and experience.

HOUSING

THE CHALLENGE: 2023 N.H. Statewide Housing Needs Assessment reports the state needs nearly 90,000 more housing units by 2040 to meet expected demand.

SOLUTIONS:

- Support practical and reasonable efforts that increase affordable housing stock in New Hampshire.
- Oppose any efforts to roll back or repeal core principles of workforce housing legislation, accessory dwelling unit legislation and the statewide administrative Housing Appeals Board.

ENERGY

THE CHALLENGE: New Hampshire's energy costs are among the nation's highest. Our average cost per kilowatt hour of electricity is nearly 70% higher than the national average and fourth highest among the states. These high costs present the risk of losing companies to less expensive regions of the country.

SOLUTIONS:

- Support state and regional policies for system reliability and lower short- and long-term energy costs.
- Support clear, consistent and balanced state energy infrastructure siting policies.
- Support existing business protection provisions like those in New Hampshire's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative program and the Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Support implementation of cost-effective energy policies, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy programs.
- Oppose policies that lead to unjust or unreasonable cost-shifting to the business community.

LABOR RULES AND REGULATIONS

THE CHALLENGE: Government overreach infringes on decision making that should be the purview of private sector employers.

SOLUTIONS:

- Oppose efforts that hinder or remove an employer's ability to make sound hiring and management decisions.
- Oppose government efforts to mandate "one-size-fits-all" employee benefits.
- Advocate for revision and modernization of RSA 275 and related statutes and regulations to make them more clear, concise and internally consistent, thereby easing the administrative burden on New Hampshire and multi-state employers.
- Support private sector right-to-work legislation in New Hampshire.
- Oppose rule-making or legislative proposals that favor organized labor interests over those of business.
- Advocate for balanced business and consumer interests in new or expanded regulations on data storage, cyberthreat protections and data breach reporting, and oppose regulations that do not fairly do so. In general, BIA believes such regulations should be established at the federal level.

ENVIRONMENT

THE CHALLENGE: Shifting regulations and statutes create uncertainty for businesses, diminish long-term plans and increase compliance costs.

SOLUTIONS:

- Oppose efforts to establish specific environmental regulatory standards and policies by statute rather than by authorized regulatory bodies.
- Oppose efforts to make New Hampshire’s environmental regulations and statutes more restrictive than federal environmental regulations, unless there is clear, science-based justification.
- Establishment and enforcement of regulations should occur at the state level, not the municipal level.
- Advocate for initiatives to streamline and expedite permitting and regulatory processes.

INFRASTRUCTURE

THE CHALLENGE: New Hampshire must continue to develop and maintain vital infrastructure to support economic growth.

SOLUTIONS:

- Advocate for adequate and equitable investment in New Hampshire’s air, road and bridge network as well as improved local public transit opportunities.
- Oppose diversion of constitutionally protected highway fund revenue for non-highway, non-bridge-related programs.
- Educate policy leaders and the public about water infrastructure (water supply, wastewater and stormwater) and dams that are at the end of their design life and/or exceeding capacity.
- Support efforts to secure funding for water infrastructure improvement.
- Support private sector investment in broadband and cellular networks including 5G and other radio frequency technologies to improve access, quality and reliability. In areas where sufficient private investment has not occurred to ensure access, support public/private partnerships utilizing available state and federal funding.
- Support state and municipal telecommunications policies that are fair and promote sustained investment and equal competition among all service providers.
- Oppose legislation to restrict telecommunications infrastructure expansion.

FISCAL POLICY

THE CHALLENGE: Protecting the New Hampshire Advantage of business-friendly regulatory and tax policies that foster economic growth.

SOLUTIONS:

- Oppose an income tax or sales tax.
- Oppose any proposal that increases Business Enterprise Tax or Business Profits Tax rates.
- Support efforts to improve New Hampshire’s research and development tax credit and oppose any effort to reduce or repeal this credit.
- Support efforts to reform and improve New Hampshire’s business regulatory environment.

HEALTH CARE

THE CHALLENGE: High cost of employee health care coverage reduces employers’ ability to grow and makes it more difficult for workers to afford health insurance.

SOLUTIONS:

- Support adequate funding for health-care services for Medicaid beneficiaries to reduce cost-shifting to the business community.
- Support permanent reauthorization for expanded Medicaid.
- Oppose new or expanded health insurance mandates.
- Support efforts that address health care cost-drivers and increase transparency.
- Support initiatives that address employees’ mental and physical health in the workplace.
- Advocate for greater transparency to address the high price of prescription drugs.

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