

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Unveils Top 2012 Legislative Priorities and Midterm Legislative Scorecard

LANSING, Mich., Jan. 17, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- With strong progress made in 2011 towards economic recovery in Michigan, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce today unveiled its top 2012 legislative priorities with an emphasis on repeal of the Personal Property Tax (PPT); transportation investment; and improving the state's regulatory climate. The Chamber also released its Midterm Legislative Scorecard to identify who supports Michigan's job providers and highlighted key legislative victories for job providers in 2011.

"In order to continue on the path to economic prosperity in Michigan, the administration and lawmakers must take action to provide for PPT relief," said Michigan Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Rich Studley. "This complicated and burdensome property tax on business is a drain on job providers, costing hundreds of millions of dollars per year that could otherwise be used for capital investment, job creation and increased wages."

The PPT—a tax on business equipment, machinery, and furnishings—costs job providers approximately \$1.2 billion per year in direct tax collections. The PPT is levied on industrial, commercial and utility property. Nearly all of the Midwest states do not impose a PPT.

"The PPT puts Michigan at a competitive disadvantage with other Great Lake States," Studley added. "If we are serious about making Michigan more competitive in the global economy, as well as in the Great Lakes region, it must be repealed."

In addition to repeal of the PPT, the Michigan Chamber identified these four top legislative priorities for 2012:

- Encourage the Completion of a Balanced State Budget On Time With No General Tax Increases.
- Support Market-Oriented Solutions to Health Care Issues. The Michigan Chamber supports health care policies based upon free market solutions and rejects governmental interference in purchasing and benefit plan design decisions.
- Improve Michigan's Regulatory Climate. The Michigan Chamber supports outcomes-based management, with input from stakeholders, to hold agencies accountable for regulatory programs.
- Improve the Condition and Performance of Michigan's Transportation System. The Michigan Chamber maintains its long-standing position that increased funding for transportation infrastructure is needed now.

"We will continue to be a strong advocate for our members on a variety of issues they identified as important," said Jim Holcomb, Senior Vice President, Business Advocacy & Associate General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "The priorities announced today identify only the top issues we will be actively addressing in 2012."

"Job providers, just like every Michigan resident, want to see our state succeed," Holcomb added. "The Michigan Chamber will remain a strong voice for job providers across our state and we believe, despite 2012 being an election year, many reforms can still be enacted to benefit our state."

In 2011, there were a number of Chamber-backed reforms enacted into law. Highlights of these include reforms to Michigan's workers' compensation and unemployment insurance laws and repeal of the MBT, in addition to other tax issues. The reforms enacted in 2011 helped put Michigan back on the path toward prosperity, and the votes by lawmakers clearly showed who is supportive of job providers in Michigan.

"Halfway through the 2011-12 legislative session, it is already evident who supports a bold reform agenda that stimulates the economy and who does not," noted Studley. "The results of the Chamber's Midterm Legislative Scorecard are stark."

"Many lawmakers in the Legislature are serious about their desire to lead Michigan's recovery by focusing on legislative solutions that spur economic prosperity and vote accordingly," Studley continued. "Sadly, some do not."

Results of the Michigan Chamber's Midterm Legislative Scorecard show: House Republicans voted 98 percent of the time in favor of job providers and House Democrats only supported job providers 7 percent of the time. Senate Republicans supported job providers 91 percent of the time while Senate Democrats only supported job providers 10 percent of the time. Majority Leader Richardville voted in favor of job providers 91 percent of the time; Minority Leader Whitmer only supported job providers 9 percent of the time. House Speaker Bolger voted in favor of job providers 100 percent of the time and House Minority Leader Hammel did not support job

providers at all, coming in with a zero percent score.

"Most lawmakers talk a good game when they are in their districts or on the campaign trail, but the votes they cast in Lansing tell the true story," Holcomb added.

The Midterm Scorecard reflects votes in 2011 only and is not the final version. The full Michigan Chamber voting record will be announced after the summer recess and prior to the November 2012 election.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,800 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. The Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is one of only four state chambers of commerce in the nation accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

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