

# *The Otsego County Chamber*

## 2011 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### **LOCAL INITIATIVES**

#### **Fiscal Reform**

The Chamber supports fiscal reforms that encourage a business friendly environment and economic growth. We support:

- a) Mandate Reform
- b) Reduce property taxes on businesses

#### **Consolidation/Privatization**

The Chamber supports consolidation and, where feasible, privatization of the government agencies and services as a means of reducing costs. Accordingly:

- a) MOSA/Transfer Station
- b) Explore selling the Otsego County Manor
- c) Consolidate, or share services, within levels of governments and agencies
- d) Explore a county wide assessor's office

#### **Economic Development**

The Chamber supports economic development that serves as a catalyst for growth and prosperity. We believe government should:

- a) Promote industrial development and commercial diversity
- b) Establish a fair budget for economic growth, tourism and business growth
- c) Oppose regulations and restrictions that limit a business' ability to thrive

#### **Infrastructure**

The Chamber supports improvement and maintenance of infrastructure. Reliable and updated infrastructure is essential for economic stability. We support:

- a) Increased investments in transportation infrastructure
- b) Invest in the development/distribution of broadband communications

#### **Education**

The Chamber believes education is a major key to economic development. We therefore:

- a) Endorse the Statewide School Finance Consortium 4 Point Plan
- b) Support real, substantive, mandate reform to lower the cost of running our schools

## **STATE INITIATIVES**

### **Fiscal Reform**

Fiscal reforms are essential to returning the state's budget to a sustainable level and putting our state back on the path to economic growth. The Chamber encourages a climate of market competitiveness and a business-friendly environment that eliminates barriers to entry. We will advocate reducing spending and taxation by:

- a) Opposing new taxes and fees on businesses
- b) Enacting a state-wide property tax cap, with corresponding mandate relief
- c) Imposing a state spending cap
- d) Supporting consolidation and shared services of local governments

### **Health Care/Health Insurance**

Between New York's already costly health care system and the uncertainty surrounding the new federal health care bill, solutions must involve all stakeholders to develop a more efficient and affordable system that expands access and improves patient outcomes. We will encourage the state to:

- a) Pursue policies that lower the costs of health care and health insurance
- b) Reduce covered mandates
- c) Reduce taxes and assessments that raise the cost of health insurance
- d) Promote more efficient health care delivery

### **Reduce the Cost of Energy in New York**

New York faces energy challenges including high energy costs, continuing reliance on imported fuels, aging energy infrastructure and climate change. Energy is critical to our state's competitiveness. It underpins our innovative high-tech economy, manufacturing base and agriculture sector. We believe the state should:

- a) Create a permanent low-cost power program
- b) Impose a moratorium on new energy surcharges, levies and assessments
- c) Support the development of in-state renewable energy projects

### **Labor and Employment**

Mandated costs have a significant impact on a company's competitive position in attracting and retaining high-quality personnel in the job market. The Chamber opposes mandates that increase New York's already high job creation costs. We

- a) Oppose paid family leave and paid sick leave mandates
- b) Oppose mandated wage rates on private sector employees, especially in the area of prevailing wage
- c) Support measures that would bring the unemployment insurance trust fund into solvency, without increasing employers' taxes to pay for immediate benefit increases

### **Regional Economic Development**

The Chamber serves as a catalyst for growth and prosperity for our members and the region. We will:

- a) Support business tax incentives and state economic development programs that encourage the retention, expansion and attraction of business in the region
- b) Support passage of the State University of New York (SUNY) Empowerment Act
- c) Oppose mandating that a prevailing wage be paid to all IDA-assisted projects

## **FEDERAL INITIATIVES**

### **Labor and Employment**

We will support policies that encourage job growth and encourage government to pursue pro-employment policies. While there may be room to discuss what can be improved in labor law, the Chamber will oppose proposals that do not respect an appropriate balance among organized labor, employees and employers. We will:

- a) Oppose Employee Free Choice Act “Card Check”
- b) Oppose expanding Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to include new leave mandates
- c) Oppose the “Dream” Act

### **Health Care/Health Insurance**

As health care costs continue to rise, fewer employers and working families will be able to afford coverage. The Chamber will support policies that will lower the costs of health care and health insurance. We will:

- a) Seek to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- b) If not repeal. Then work to amend the PPACA through common sense changes to employer requirements, taxation and other burdens created under the law
- c) Support reforming the medical tort system to make costs more affordable and predictable
- d) Support raising awareness of the positive effects of workplace wellness and giving tax-favored status to programs aimed at keeping employees healthy

### **Energy**

Energy is critical to our nation’s competitiveness in the world economy. The Chamber supports energy policies that will increase domestic energy supplies and ensure the availability of electricity and fuel for American consumers. We will advocate policies that should:

- a) Increase energy efficiency and conservation
- b) Ensure adequate energy supplies and generation
- c) Renew and expand energy infrastructure
- d) Ensure appropriate considerations of the effects of regulatory policies on energy supplies

### **Transportation**

America’s transportation infrastructure is aging. The Chamber believes that without proper infrastructure investment, our nation’s economic stability, potential for job growth and competitiveness are threatened. We will:

- a) Support increased investment in transportation infrastructure.