

## 2018 PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

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**Ashley Allison**, *Waco Foundation*

**Jessica Attas**, *Vice-President of Public Policy, Greater Waco Chamber*

**Michael Baldwin**, *Oncor*

**Rick Brophy**, *Waco Business League Appointed Office Initiative/Beard Kultgen Brophy Bostwick and Dickson, PLLC*

**Kris Collins**, *Senior Vice-President of Economic Development, Greater Waco Chamber*

**Mayor Kyle Deaver**, *City of Waco*

**Rochonda Farmer-Neal**, *Baylor University*

**Judge Scott Felton**, *McLennan County*

**Roland Goertz**, *Waco Family Health Center*

**Kimberly Hilley**, *TXU/Luminant*

**Adam Hutchison**, *Texas State Technical College*

**Debbie Keel**, *Past Committee Chair / AT&T*

**John Kinnaird**, *City of Waco / Community Bank & Trust*

**Ryan Lindsey**, *CRH Americas Materials*

**Dr. Johnette McKown**, *McLennan Community College*

**Dr. Jerry Maze**, *Region 12 Education Service Center*

**Matt Meadors**, *President & CEO, Greater Waco Chamber*

**Michael Reitmeier**, *Chair, Waco Business League/Jaynes, Reitmeier, Boyd and Therrell, P.C.*

**Mark Reynolds**, *Chairman of the Board, Greater Waco Chamber / Extraco Banks*

**Glenn Robinson**, *Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Medical Center*

**Scott Salmans**, *WRS Group*

**Tom Salome**, *M. Lipsitz & Co.*

**Rick Sheldon**, *Sheldon Real Estate*

**Dr. Sharon Shields**, *County Superintendents*

**Wiley Stem**, *City of Waco*

**Terry Stevens**, *Chair, McLennan County Spaceport Development Corporation*

**Jeffrey Stubbs**, *McLennan County Chamber Alliance / Hewitt Chamber of Commerce*

**Josh Tetens**, *McLennan County Chamber Alliance / Bellmead Chamber of Commerce*

**Hal Whitaker**, *Chairman of the Board, Greater Waco Chamber/Englander dZignPak*



GREATER WACO CHAMBER

2018

# Federal Policy Priorities



## Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Waco Chamber is a well-respected, high-profile economic and community development organization advancing a visionary agenda for economic growth and quality of life.

**Staff:** Professional team with 21 full-time employees, plus 2+ interns throughout the year.

**Facility:** \$4.3 million first green chamber building in America (LEED-Gold certified)

**Organizational Structure:** A comprehensive approach to mission fulfillment.

- Economic Development, includes housing and staffing for
  - Waco McLennan County Economic Development Corporation
  - Waco Industrial Foundation
  - McLennan County Spaceport Development Corporation
  - Foreign-Trade Zone #246 Administrator
- Organizational Development:
  - 1,600+ member businesses and non-profit organizations
- Public Policy
  - Regional Collaboration, spearheading 10-chamber McLennan County Chamber Alliance
  - State and Federal Advocacy

## Did You Know?

- Waco has one lake, two rivers and a 416-acre park with hike and bike trails near our vibrant downtown
- Waco was announced as the No. 2 Travelers' Choice Destinations On The Rise Awards for 2018 by *TripAdvisor.com*
- Waco is home to five institutions of higher learning, providing a skilled workforce for diverse industry sectors.



WacoChamber.com  
254.757.5600



# 2018 | Federal Policy Priorities

## Public Policy Initiative

As an organization dedicated to the economic well-being of McLennan County, the Greater Waco Chamber actively seeks to promote policies that are conducive to the further development of this region.

Our public policy initiative includes establishing positions on issues that impact our members and the overall community and economic development of the area; educating elected and appointed officials about these issues; actively educating the membership and the community on possible policy impact; and encouraging membership involvement in the Chamber's advocacy efforts and programs.

The Public Policy Committee provides a voice for Chamber members in economic, legislative and policy issues that impact community and economic development. The role of the committee is to be a liaison

for our business community with local, state and federal officials and various government entities. Listening to our members, we inform, educate, engage and advocate for businesses to our legislators on issues of importance for a thriving business environment for our community. While this work will always be non-partisan, it is political in nature. We work to engage elected and appointed officials of any party to educate and advocate for our community.

## Public Policy Committee: Working for Business and Our Community

Informing, educating, engaging and advocating for the Greater Waco business community regarding relevant public policy for community and economic development and growth.

## Economic Development

**A focus on maintaining a business-friendly climate at all levels of government, and advocating for statewide programs, incentives and industries that strengthen economic opportunities for job growth, entrepreneurship and competitive capital expansions.**

### Workforce

- Observe, adopt and adequately fund successful policies and programs- such as work-based learning or amending the Work Opportunity Tax Credit- that **bridge the skills gap** and ensure a dynamic workforce development system for the future.
- Support opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to reboot sector-based partnerships and expanded CTE state grant funding for programs that are employer led and advocate for demand-driven workforce development and training programs.
- Support immigration reforms that are responsive to our workforce needs and lead to expanded access to talent, domestically or internationally, boost economic growth, create jobs, and spur innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Support legislative solutions that promote diversity, inclusion, and equality to strengthen our workforce and leadership pipeline.

### Small Business & Entrepreneurship

- Continued support for programs and agencies that aid small businesses and entrepreneurs, or foster community development and economic impact, including EDA, CDBG, SBA, USDA, NIH, MEP and NIST.
- Advance legislation that provides greater access to capital, such as the State Small Business Credit Initiative, as well as continuing support for existing access to capital programs like SBA's 504 and 7(a) programs.
- Support of policies and programs and a regulatory framework that supports entrepreneurship and innovation.

### International Opportunities

- Seek out policies and new ways, such as trade agreements and a strong Export-Import Bank that protects American businesses, to expand access to foreign markets for American made goods and services to continue to grow our exports.
- Support renegotiation and modernization of NAFTA that allows for maximum benefit of NAFTA for our state economy, job creation and business.

## Water & Natural Resources

**We support policies and initiatives that improve environmental quality, maintain compliance, and promote development without compromising quality of life.**

- Ensure the EPA evaluates the economic impact and job loss in its regulations, as is required by all major environmental laws, advocating for balancing critical investments in infrastructure along with environmental protections.
- Support the review and revision of the "Waters of the United States" Rule to provide a reasonable means for considering how jurisdictional waters are determined and the scientific basis for how those waters are regulated, protecting local, regional and State primacy over its waters and water management.
- Support legislation that affirms the rights and powers of the state government in environmental programs and appropriate regulatory oversight.
- Support federal regulatory reforms to streamline water and infrastructure project permitting.
- Support funding for federal programs that hasten compliance with the Safe Drinking Act, and other federal mandates.
- Support funding of the Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI Program as revamped under Section 4909 of the WIIN Act, to facilitate water reuse and conservation projects that will help meet our area industries' water needs and conserve our valuable water resources.
- Oppose Section 2014 of S. 601 in the Water Resources Development Act which gives the Army Corps of Engineers unprecedented discretion to adjust reservoir operations without Congressional authorization.
- Oppose efforts to implement or enforce the federal Waters of the United States final rule, which broadens the jurisdiction of the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act to include "other waters" located in isolated places at the "Waters of the U.S." without requiring case-specific evaluation.
- Ensure the EPA evaluates the economic impact and job loss in its regulations, as is required by all major environmental laws, advocating for balancing critical investments in infrastructure along with environmental protections.
- Support for funding programs that allow local entities to monitor and study air and water quality, as well as water supply and ownership, including property rights issues and drought management policy.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

Transportation is vital for the economic growth of Texas. We will advocate for policies and solutions to meet the transportation needs of the fastest-growing state in the nation. Keeping commerce going requires a consistent funding stream that offers long-term planning potential across all modes of transporting goods, people, and services.

- Support a permanent fix to make the Highway Trust Fund solvent and ensure a fair rate of return and fund the complete expansion of the Interstate 35 corridor through Waco to support the transportation of international and national goods.
- Support recognition of previous state investments in infrastructure, such as Propositions 1 or 7, as potential leverage for any state or private sector match required for federal infrastructure dollars.
- Ensure any new transportation funding formulas are based upon most recent and accurate U.S. Census population data.
- Advocate for federal policies that encourage private sector investment in public infrastructure.
- Advocate for suballocation of Metropolitan Mobility funding through the Surface Transportation Program, without qualification based on arbitrary population cutoff limits. Policies should support disbursements reflecting changing population trends and growth.
- Increase funding to the Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST) to allow for modernization and streamlined permitting to facilitate growing a national thriving space industry and economy.
- Advocate for discretion in the Airport Improvement Program funding to allow for increased spaceport funding.
- Oppose privatization of Air Traffic Control that would place an undue burden on business aviation fees.
- Support programs that support and fund diverse aspects of vital infrastructure projects.
- Advocate for the Greater Waco area's best interests in high speed rail access.

## Health Care

**We will inform and promote solutions for employers and healthcare providers alike that decrease cost, expand access, and increase the quality of healthcare, mitigating the rising costs and regulations of healthcare delivery.**

- Advance successful ideas from the private sector that reduce costs, advance quality, and improve health outcomes.
- Support workplace health and wellness programs in order to improve employee health and worker productivity.
- Support repair or replacement of the Affordable Care Act that keeps the administration's promise, protects businesses, and provides flexibility. Repeal taxes that increase premiums, such as the excise tax, HIT, and medical device tax.
- Improve flexibility for tax-preferred accounts that encourage careful healthcare spending, like FSAs, HSAs, and HRAs.
- Support for improving and increasing access to mental health treatment programs, prioritizing preventative and ongoing services and care, and coverage of these programs through insurance.
- Address and reign in hyper-inflation of pharmaceuticals to promote market competition and promote innovation and value.
- Oppose reduction of 340b eligibility, so safety net hospitals and care providers may continue to provide assistance to low-income and indigent populations.
- Support Graduate Medical Education funding to ensure the training and availability of doctors, nurses and other health care providers in order to meet the growing demand of patient care.

## Education

Children are the future of our communities and our workforce, and an essential part of future economic growth. As such, we will advocate for positions important to our educational systems- from early childhood development to preK-12 to higher education- that every child may arrive at kindergarten school-ready, graduate high school college-ready, and be workforce-ready to help build and strengthen a thriving city, state, and nation for future generations.

### Higher Education

- Support adequate funding to support inflationary increases to the Pell Grant maximum award without limiting eligibility and extend lifetime Pell eligibility to 14 full-time equivalent semesters.
- Expand the year-round Pell Grant to support short-term credentials sought by local employers.
- Support the reauthorization and increased funding of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act and focus on reforms that strengthen business engagement and ties between education institutions and local businesses, maintaining flexibility to better prepare youth and adults for careers aligned to local industry needs.
- Support the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to support student access and success by improving student aid programs; granting institutions the ability to limit borrowing; revise cohort default rates by incorporating the percentage of students who borrow; excluding Pell Grant and SEOG funds from Pell Grant eligibility; simplify the FAFSA; ensuring accurate and complete measurements of student success; reducing regulatory burdens; improving institutional support and transparency; and rejecting any proposal for institutional student-loan risk-sharing.
- Increase SNAP Employment & Training investments in Farm Bill reauthorization, and modernize TANF program to support high-quality workforce training opportunities.

### Public Education

- Support equitable and adequate funding for Texas public schools, including in the flagship federal education programs such as Title funding and special education funding.
- Support funding to support high quality preschool for eligible families.
- Support efforts to improve and expand access to quality Early Childhood Education programs, to ensure children arrive at kindergarten school-ready, laying the foundation for future workforce-readiness.
- Support implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, with an emphasis on state accountability systems and providing for more local flexibility to make educational decisions
- Oppose limiting the flexibility of local school boards to make decisions that serve the best interests of their districts

## Fiscal Policy & Regulatory Relief

**We support policies that support the long-term fiscal health of our competitive and growing economy, stabilize debt, foster economic growth and broaden prosperity, streamline regulations and simplify compliance while encouraging fiscally responsible policymaking.**

- Support policies that reduce long-term debt, achieve long-term fiscal stability and promote economic growth.
- Support regulatory reform and streamlining- across all industry sectors- that takes into account the views of communities and businesses, and evaluates the impact of rules on jobs and small business.
- Address tax reform implementation with key reducing the cost of compliance allowing companies to reinvest in themselves and workers.
- Support Private Activity Bonds as a key tool in driving development.