



GREATER LOUISVILLE INC.
The Metro Chamber of Commerce

Federal Priorities

2021-2022

As the world and Greater Louisville community continue to cope with the challenges of the changing pandemic, Greater Louisville, Inc. will continue supporting a strong recovery for our region through federal advocacy efforts. GLI takes positions on policy issues that build a more prosperous and more inclusive region. Our key positions are outlined in this document.



Business Competitiveness



BANKING REGULATIONS

GLI urges Congress to review and repeal overly burdensome banking regulations that increase costs and stifle lending to businesses, ultimately limiting investment. Regulations for banks should be tailored to include risk in addition to asset size.

BLOCKCHAIN

Blockchain technology promises to disrupt the online economy in a manner which improves the lives of consumers and opens the door to new forms of digital commerce. GLI supports policies which provide regulatory clarity for entrepreneurs and developers who are seeking to unlock the innovation promised by this new technology.

BROADBAND ACCESS

Congress and the Administration should support low-income consumers by subsidizing broadband services. This includes assisting consumers in paying for the broadband service and provider of their choice with widely available and accepted payment methods, like the prepaid debit cards used to distribute health care FSA funds or the Direct Express MasterCard used to distribute Social Security benefits.

BUSINESS RECOVERY LOANS AND GRANTS

Helping businesses of all sizes recover from the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will be a long-term effort. GLI supports the creation of additional programs to help the hardest hit industry sectors recover from the aftermath of the pandemic.

DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY

Congressional action is needed to establish a federal data security and privacy protection framework that includes guidelines, education, and funding. This will protect consumers and businesses by providing certainty and consistency of data security from hackers and ransomware.

FAIR LABOR REGULATIONS

Federal labor regulations should include sufficient flexibility to account for different business types and outline clear expectations from employers.

- GLI supports allowing employers to offer employees compensatory time off as an alternative to monetary compensation for overtime work.
- Any future changes to the threshold for the employee exemption for overtime pay should avoid excessive increases in costs for employers, especially small businesses, and ensure that employers are able to adapt to rule changes without fundamentally altering their business model.

FUNDING FOR THE ARTS

Greater Louisville's arts scene competes with the top cities in the world and drives economic growth. GLI supports federal funding for arts programs to help our region continue to attract and retain top talent, boost tourism, and sustain a positive quality of life for our citizens.

JOINT EMPLOYER

To help Greater Louisville businesses operate under reasonable, commonsense rules, the federal definition of joint employer should appropriately limit the standard of joint employer and support franchisor-franchisee relationships.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

GLI supports trade agreements that promote open, free, and fair trade with other countries and opposes the imposition of tariffs or any approach to international trade that could bring harm to Greater Louisville businesses or limit access to global markets and disrupt supply chains. To that end, GLI encourages policies that would lead to the lifting of retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods, especially the European Union's retaliatory tariffs on bourbon, Kentucky's signature industry. To ensure fairness in free trade, GLI supports efforts by federal policymakers to deter currency manipulation.

INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISADVANTAGED AREAS

To spur investment and create jobs in low-income, underdeveloped areas in greater Louisville, GLI supports making permanent and expanding the New Markets Tax Credit and finding ways to incentivize and encourage businesses already existing within Opportunity Zones to expand and invest additional capital in those areas. GLI also supports federal efforts to encourage pro-development zoning and land-use policies at the state and local levels.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION PLAN REFORM

GLI supports reforms to the multiemployer pension system that are fair and reasonable for workers, employers, and the American taxpayer. The Central States Pension Fund covers thousands of Kentuckians and more than 377,000 workers throughout the country. Insolvency would be devastating to participants and our regional economy and would put jobs and businesses at risk.

NET NEUTRALITY

Congressional action is needed to remove uncertainty from the market, provide predictability for both business and consumers, and ensure the issue of net neutrality does not swing back-and-forth with every change in administration. Through legislation that applies to all internet companies by establishing basic safeguards around transparency, openness, non-discrimination, and privacy protection for all internet users, Congress can permanently protect the open internet for all users while encouraging continued investment for the next generation of internet innovation.

REGULATORY GUIDANCE AND LIABILITY PROTECTIONS FOR BUSINESSES

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, over thirty states have passed temporary liability protections for businesses, leading to a patchwork of laws. This unpredictable environment threatens to expose businesses to costly and often predatory litigation. Congress should pass legislation that provides temporary, targeted, liability relief. This legislation should create a presumption that a business has met the standard of care with respect to protection of its employees, visitors, and patrons if it has complied with the recommendations of the CDC and/or state and local executive orders. In addition, Congress should pass comprehensive tort reform to lessen the likelihood of frivolous litigation long-term.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

GLI encourages full federal funding for Small Business Development Centers, which support entrepreneurs and small businesses with technical assistance, capacity building, access to emergency loans, and numerous other key services.



TAX REFORM

Congress should retain the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which reformed the U.S. tax code to allow American businesses to compete in today's global economy and enact additional reforms. To facilitate economic growth in greater Louisville, GLI supports the following key reforms:

- Permanently remove limitations on the business interest expense deduction.
- Make permanent the federal alcohol excise tax rates established by TCJA.
- Make permanent the full expensing of new capital assets to encourage business investment and manufacturing.

Congress must also be cognizant of and refrain from further increasing the growing national debt which continues to threaten our nation's future economic stability. It is imperative that Congress address the serious fiscal challenges we face.

Education And Workforce Development

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

GLI supports comprehensive immigration reform to ensure our region can continue attracting talent from around the world and opposes efforts that would restrict the ability of regional employers to find and employ the workers they need. Comprehensive immigration reform should include streamlined and equitable pathways to citizenship, allow businesses to recruit high-skill workers from around the world, and preserve DACA and protect Dreamers from the threat of detainment and deportation.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Criminal justice reform is vital to workforce development efforts in regions like greater Louisville. Congress should build on legislative achievements such as the FIRST STEP Act to continue refocusing our criminal justice system on rehabilitation, reintegration, and training.

DISPLACED WORKERS

To help displaced workers reenter the labor force, GLI advocates for increased federal resources for reskilling and retraining initiatives. Scalable new workforce programs will be needed to support displaced workers adapt more quickly to a rapidly changing economy and address short and long-term workforce challenges. As we recover from COVID-19, it is critical to get people back into the workforce. While workforce participation has been a long-term concern, an active and skilled workforce is imperative to a successful post-pandemic recovery. Return to work incentives should be encouraged and disincentives to work should be identified and eradicated.





EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

GLI supports recent increases to federal funding for early childhood education and development through resources such as the Child Care Development Block Grant. Congress should build on these funding levels to increase access to high-quality early childhood education and development programming and to remove childcare as a barrier to workforce participation.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO CHILDCARE

Affordable childcare continues to be a serious barrier to entry and re-entry into the workforce. The pandemic has exacerbated this issue with an ongoing shortage of childcare workers and childcare facilities. GLI supports federal legislation aimed at expanding accessible, reliable, and quality childcare.

FINANCIAL AID AND STUDENT DEBT

GLI urges reforms to financial aid programs to improve access and affordability while incentivizing outcomes. This should include a review of the gainful employment rule. Congress must also act to mitigate the negative impact of rising student debt on economic growth and entrepreneurship by ensuring borrowers have adequate flexibility to repay loans and by supporting business-led efforts to reduce educational debt. Policymakers should support employers seeking to help employees pay off student debt and develop continuing education and tuition compensation programs.

HBCU FUNDING

Many historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across America need serious campus infrastructure repair and new facilities constructed. GLI supports federal funding for these improvements such as The Institutional Grants for New Infrastructure, Technology, and Education (IGNITE) Act . GLI encourages Congress to expand the bill by making funding for capital improvements available to all HBCUs, including smaller schools that currently lack requisite bonding capacity.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

Healthcare providers face widespread shortage of qualified healthcare professionals. The problem is especially dire for qualified nurses. GLI encourages federal investment in existing and new federal initiatives to help identify and build pipelines for recruitment, education, and training of nurses at all levels.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

GLI supports higher education funding tied to institutional performance, funding for research and development grants to colleges and universities, and funding that promotes access for more students, regardless of socioeconomic background, to attain a high-quality post-secondary education. This includes lifting the ban on incarcerated students receiving Pell Grants and increasing Pell Grants to enable more people to enter the workforce.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GLI urges the allocation of additional funding for research and innovation connected with technology transfer mechanisms to enhance the global competitiveness contributions of the Kentuckiana region's industries, colleges, and universities. Our region relies on technology-based innovation, such as development of new drugs and therapies, new ways to automate manufacturing, and advances in artificial intelligence for economic competitiveness.

SECOND CHANCE HIRING

Federal legislation should be passed to increase support for employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals through second chance hiring, occupational licensing reform, and similar initiatives to increase workforce participation among this population and decrease recidivism.

STEAM EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

STEAM education and workforce programs are vital to filling open positions in Greater Louisville's regional business clusters and are key to cultivating innovation, entrepreneurship, and a competitive tech sector. Federal support through grants and other funding streams can help our region develop the programs needed to cultivate a competitive, forward-looking workforce.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Supported employment initiatives can help alleviate workforce shortages and facilitate workforce participation among marginalized communities. GLI supports continued funding for vocational rehabilitation agencies and state supported employment services and encourages programs and policies aimed at assisting employers with employing individuals with substance use disorders, criminal backgrounds, or other barriers to workforce participation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GLI supports program funding focused on integrating work-based learning and competency-based education, such as apprenticeships, and prioritization of credentialing outcomes. Continued funding for programs and grants like those offered through the Department of Labor to increase traditional trade and new technology apprenticeships should be provided.

THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

GLI encourages Congress to allocate additional funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to support the important work of business-led Workforce Boards like KentuckianaWorks and favors allowing increased flexibility in how these funds are used at the state and local levels.



Environment & Energy

APPROPRIATE TREATMENT STRATEGIES AND REGULATIONS FOR PFAS

GLI encourages EPA to develop a better understanding of the public health and environmental risks posed by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and the transport pathways by which these chemicals move within the environment. Ensuring that EPA's response to PFAS is fully grounded in scientific analysis will help ensure regulations are appropriate, improve the treatment strategies by public clean water utilities, and avoid unintended consequences.

CLEAN FUTURE ACT

GLI urges Congress to review closely the CLEAN Future Act and its potential negative impact on Greater Louisville to provide safe, reliable, reasonably cost electricity to its citizens resulting from the unrealistic proposed timeline for greenhouse gas reductions. If such legislation is adopted, it should include a realistic transition plan for communities, like Greater Louisville, that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels to avoid placing excessive financial burdens on businesses and residents or causing disruptions in essential services.





FUNDING FOR BROWNFIELDS REMEDIATION

In addition to being an important economic development tool for job creation and leveraging of investment dollars, Brownfield remediation and redevelopment programs are critical for reducing the prevalence of blight and hazardous properties in Greater Louisville. Brownfields have been shown to eliminate environmental hazards, reduce crime, increase affordable housing and mixed-use developments, and increase social and economic accessibility for marginalized populations. We support funding and access to Brownfields Assessment Grants, Revolving Loan Fund Grants, Cleanup Grants, encouragement of community developers and investors, and other programs and parties that facilitate the rehabilitation of these properties.

GREEN HOUSE GAS REGULATION

As greenhouse gas emission policy is discussed, GLI encourages all policy makers to continue to keep energy costs low and ensure reliability for current and future economic development.

NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

GLI encourages regulators and legislators to review closely updates to fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), including application in ancillary rule makings such as the CLEAN Future Act. Adjustments to PM 2.5, in particular the definition of “Overburdened Census Tract” with its standard and requirements if the standard is not met, could be detrimental to many major employers in Greater Louisville. Also, GLI encourages close review of Ozone standards. Greater Louisville is working towards attainment to the 2015 standard and the limit is currently impacted by background emissions outside the control of local sources.



REGULATORY REFORMS

Regulatory streamlining and flexibility are critical to support businesses during times of emergency and economic recoveries. GLI strongly encourages continued endeavors that mutually sustain protection of the nation’s environment while working to simplify necessary federal environmental requirements. GLI encourages expeditious review, revision, or elimination of unnecessary and/or burdensome federal regulations to reduce bureaucratic delays and costs present in the current system. It is imperative that reforms foster, and not impede, economic growth in the United States. To this end, GLI supports giving states the option (not a requirement) to adopt the revised NSR Applicability Test under the New Source Review permit program.

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

As part of an environmental violation settlement, an alleged violator may propose to undertake a project to provide tangible environmental or public health benefits to the affected community or environment, that is closely related to the violation being resolved, but goes beyond what is required under federal, state, or local laws. This voluntary agreement can include a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) that is considered in determining an appropriate settlement penalty. GLI supports the continued use of SEPs as a way for the regulated community to benefit the overall community or the environment as they return to compliance.

WATERS OF THE U.S.

GLI supports a definition of “waters of the U.S.” that respects states’ rights, achieves a reasonable balance of ensuring environmental protection while not stifling economic development, provides regulatory certainty, and is consistent with Supreme Court decisions constraining agency jurisdiction. GLI encourages the U.S. EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to seek additional ways to provide clarity to the regulated community with regards to projects that may involve jurisdictional determinations.



Health Care

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

GLI supports allowing more flexibility under the Affordable Care Act's shared responsibility provisions, such as reforming the employer mandate and returning to the 40-hour workweek as the threshold for determining which employees are entitled to employer-provided health care coverage.

ASSOCIATION HEALTHCARE PLANS

AHPs have helped thousands of small business owners and entrepreneurs access quality health care and provide coverage for their employees and families. GLI supports giving these plans more flexibility under ERISA and allowing sole proprietors to join AHPs, which would help a key part of Greater Louisville's economy access health care coverage.

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

GLI urges Congress to expand current legislation that increases access to health care through telehealth and alternative payment models for both Medicare and Medicaid populations. Congress should also enact legislation that allows for flexibility in Medicaid, Medicare, and Medicare Advantage Plans qualified benefits that will expand offerings for affordable and accessible care to beneficiaries.



MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

GLI supports proposals to allocate increased resources for mental health treatment and research and encourages the implementation of programs that provide treatment alternatives to incarceration.

PUBLIC HEALTH

GLI strongly supports the continued dedication of federal resources to protecting public health, including funding for:

- Increased access to testing for COVID-19 and other viruses
- Continued streamlining of the development of scalable vaccines, therapeutics and treatment strategies for COVID-19 and other viruses.
- Ensuring ample access to supplies of personal protective equipment to protect our regional health care workers and their patients.

The federal government must also allocate resources to rebuild and protect the health care infrastructure of the United States by supporting hospitals, health systems, and physician practices that are critical to protecting the health of the public. This includes ensuring there is no erosion of the intended purposes of the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act.

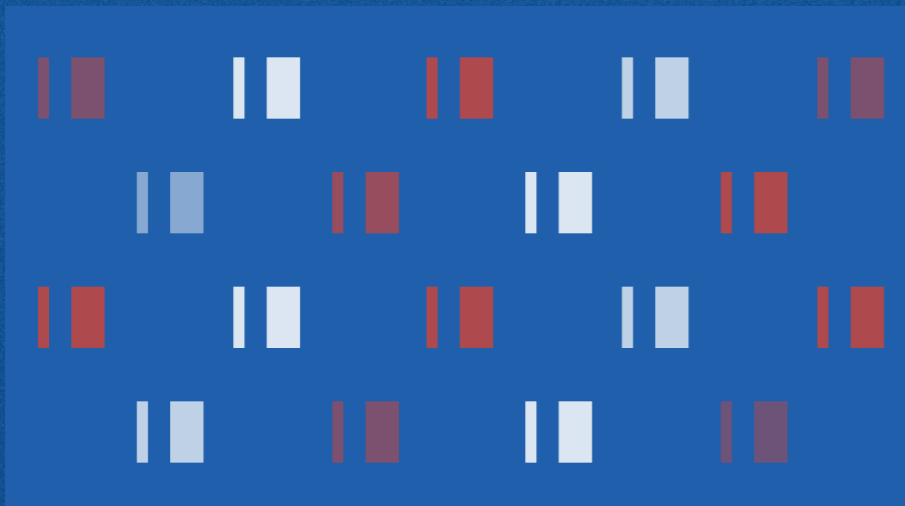


SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

GLI encourages continual and regularly scheduled appropriations of resources to fund comprehensive treatment and recovery programs for substance use disorders (SUD).

TELEHEALTH

GLI is supportive of the use of telehealth as a tool for providing access to health care services in accordance with applicable state and federal guidance and regulations. During the Public Health Emergency, regulatory requirements were relaxed, which allowed patients to receive necessary healthcare in a virtual environment. We urge Congress to continue efforts to ensure patients' continued access to health care in a telehealth environment provided that protections to ensure patients' personal safety and health information are in place and that services provided are appropriate for delivery through virtual means



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Congress should adopt a set of flexible but clear universal standards to encourage the production and deployment of autonomous vehicles, including for commercial purposes. In addition, federal policymakers and members of Congress should work with the Army and Department of Defense to leverage Fort Knox as an area to test, research, and develop autonomous vehicles in Greater Louisville, which is already a key location for logistics and manufacturing. This would solidify our region in an emerging technology sector and cultivate partnerships between Greater Louisville and federal defense efforts.

AVIATION

GLI encourages lawmakers to increase federal appropriations for the Airport Improvement Program to the 2011 funding level of \$3.5 billion per year. GLI also supports proposals to relax restrictions on flight sharing to promote the use and growth of general aviation airports within our region.

DEVELOP OUR REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORKFORCE

To help address the nation's truck-driver shortage and support the development of transportation workforce in bi-state regions like Greater Louisville, Congress should pursue legislation such as the DRIVE-Safe Act, which would remove outdated age restrictions on interstate transportation for licensed commercial drivers and improve safety standards.





FUNDING FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Greater Louisville relies upon tens of millions of dollars in federal funding in support of the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) and federal grants for parks and highway projects. These funds support infrastructure improvements that include vehicles, roadway improvements, and advanced technology that provide more efficient transit service for residents. The federal government must continue supporting public transit with a multi-year transportation authorization bill and through federal grant programs such as RAISE to support the maintenance and growth of public transit systems in key economic and workforce hubs like Greater Louisville.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

Congressional action to rebuild infrastructure is vital to the economic future of Greater Louisville and restarting our economy. Congress should pursue legislation to significantly increase funding for major infrastructure projects and repeal language from the FAST Act that reduced the Federal Reserve dividend rate to fund infrastructure and transportation projects. In addition, lawmakers should streamline permitting processes and remove barriers that prevent the leverage of private capital for public infrastructure projects.



INLAND WATERWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Inland waterways play a key role in international and domestic trade. Full federal funding to support critical water infrastructure improvements is necessary to promote inland waterway commerce.

RAILROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

GLI supports increased federal funding for maintaining and improving the safety of railroad infrastructure. Dedicated resources for short line tracks and regional railroads are needed for the sustainability and improvement of multi-modal freight transportation in Greater Louisville.

WATER, WASTEWATER, STORMWATER, AND FLOOD PROTECTION

Additional federal resources are sorely needed in Greater Louisville for water, wastewater, stormwater, and flood protection infrastructure. Such resources are critical not only for safety and public health but also economic development. GLI encourages federal support through infrastructure legislation, continued State Revolving Fund appropriations, and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.



GLI ADVOCACY

GLI relies on hundreds of volunteers from the Greater Louisville business community to develop legislative priorities and set positions on key public policy issues that affect economic growth and workforce development. With the support of GLI's Board of Directors, GLI's Public Policy Council leads GLI's public policy efforts with the assistance of six Issue Advisory Committees:

- Bi-State Issues
- Business Competitiveness
- Education and Workforce Development
- Energy and Environment
- Health Care
- Transportation and Infrastructure



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