

# FEDERAL AGENDA

2020-2021

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The development of GLI's federal priorities is led by GLI's Board of Directors, Public Policy Council, and more than 300 volunteers who serve on GLI's Public Policy Issue Committees. Every spring, the Greater Louisville business community comes together to review our region's most pressing policy needs at the federal level and to propose GLI's top federal priorities.

GLI's 2020-2021 Federal Agenda includes short-term priorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the organization's long-term policy recommendations to support economic growth and workforce development throughout America's economic recovery.







# COVID-19

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue funding small business loan programs and give businesses more flexibility in how loans can be utilized and forgiven.

Establish robust legal liability protections for employers to protect businesses from costly litigation related to the pandemic.

Refocus federal workforce and training programs to assist workers displaced by the pandemic in developing new skills and returning to the labor force.

Encourage regulatory flexibility and the development of accessible guidelines by federal agencies to assist businesses with regulatory compliance.

Dedicate large-scale resources to protect public health and rebuild our health care infrastructure.



## BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

### 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.

### 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.

- Congress should continually evaluate additional funding for impacted businesses through loans and grant programs.
- Small businesses should be afforded increased flexibility in how loans can be used and forgiven so that employers can fully meet fixed-cost obligations such as utilities, rents, and mortgages, which will help avoid further economic damage from the pandemic.
- As the economy reopens, businesses should be allowed to utilize federal support to offset costs that may come with adherence to public health and safety guidelines.
- Congress should develop a “bridge loan” program for larger employers that experience revenue losses and staff reductions as a result of the pandemic.
- Programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) should be opened up to more nonprofits, including trade associations and chambers of commerce.
- Federal policymakers and the U.S. Small Business Administration should provide additional guidance to lenders to streamline application and approval processes to ensure that businesses have access to clear guidance and receive aid as quickly as possible.

### State and Local Government Budgets

GLI urges congressional leaders to explore and pursue legislative solutions to support state and local governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Regulatory Guidance and Liability Protections for Businesses

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Greater Louisville employers must comply with rapidly changing business regulations and new expectations for public health and safety standards. This unpredictable environment threatens to expose businesses to costly and often predatory litigation. Federal policymakers should work to ensure that regulatory guidelines are readily available to employers that clearly outline government expectations for health and safety. Congress should pass legislation to protect businesses from unnecessary and frivolous lawsuits related to the pandemic. 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.

## Banking Regulations

GLI urges Congress to review and repeal overly burdensome banking regulations that stifle lending to businesses, increase costs, and prevent investment. Regulations for banks should take a tailored approach and include risk rather than just asset size.

## Data Security and Privacy

Congressional action is needed to establish a federal data security and privacy protection framework, which would provide certainty and consistency for consumers and businesses.

## Fair Labor Regulations

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

- GLI encourages the Department of Labor to provide additional guidance on the leave provisions included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- 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.

## 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.

## 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 new 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Arts Funding

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.

## 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.

## 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.







## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Displaced Workers

Workers displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by other causes such as automation, will need continued support through unemployment insurance and other safety net programs. GLI supports policies aimed at strengthening these programs at the state and federal levels and ensuring their sustainability. 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, help them adapt more quickly to a rapidly changing economy, and address short and long-term workforce challenges.

### Workforce Education

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 apprenticeships should be provided.

### 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.

### 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 child care as a barrier to workforce participation.

### Comprehensive Immigration Reform

GLI supports comprehensive immigration reform to ensure our region can continue attracting talent from around the world and GLI 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, preserve DACA and protect Dreamers from the threat of detention and deportation.



## Postsecondary Education

GLI supports higher education funding tied to institutional performance, funding for research and development grants to research universities, and funding that promotes access for more students, regardless of socioeconomic background, to attain a high-quality four-year degree.

## 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.

## 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.



## 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.

## 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, 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.







## ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

### Affordable Clean Energy Rule

GLI supports the emissions guidelines of the proposed Affordable Clean Energy rule that informs the development, submittal, and implementation of state plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired steam electric generating units.

### Regulatory Reforms

Regulatory streamlining and flexibility are critical to support businesses during times of emergency and economic recoveries. GLI encourages continued regulatory flexibility and discretion in compliance matters as outlined in EPA's March 26, 2020 Memorandum regarding "COVID-19 Implications for EPA's Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Program." Beyond this, 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.

### Waters of the U.S.

GLI supports the pre-2015 rule for defining waters of the U.S., which was reimplemented in December 2019. Regulations under the pre-2015 rule achieve a reasonable balance of ensuring environmental protection while not stifling economic development. 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.

### Funding for Brownfields Remediation

In addition to being an important economic development tool for job creation and leveraging of investment dollars, Brownfields 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. GLI supports 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.

### 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.



## HEALTH CARE

### Public Health

GLI strongly supports dedicating increased federal resources to protect public health, including funding to:

- Increase access to testing for COVID-19 and other viruses.
- Streamline the development of scalable vaccines, therapeutics, and treatment strategies.
- Ensure ample access to supplies of personal protective equipment to protect our regional health care workforce.

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.

### 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.

### Substance Use Disorders

GLI encourages continual and regularly-scheduled appropriations of resources to fund comprehensive treatment and recovery programs for substance use disorders (SUD). In addition, Congress should permit SUD records to be shared between covered entities by passing legislation to align 42 CFR Part 2 with HIPAA. This would help ensure patients are able to receive the quality, integrated care they need.

### 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.

### 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.

### The Stark Law

GLI is supportive of efforts underway to update and reform the Stark Law. Reforms should include allowing federal and state governments to encourage innovation in the provision of quality and cost-efficient health care, and changing the applicable penalties to be proportional to the nature of the violation.





## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Federal Resources for 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.



## Funding for Public Transportation

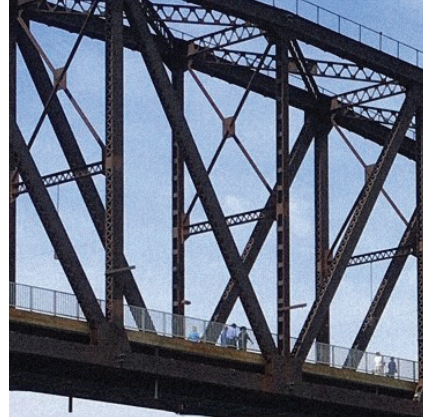
Greater Louisville relies upon tens of millions of dollars in federal funding in support of the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) and federal grants for parks and highway projects. The federal government must continue supporting public transit with operating and capital funding. Federal grant programs such as BUILD should support the maintenance and growth of public transit systems in key economic and workforce hubs like Greater Louisville.

## 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.

## 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.





## 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



The dedicated volunteers that lead the Public Policy Council and GLI's Issue Advisory Committees and the hundreds of members who give their time are the key to GLI's success in advocating for the business community's priorities.

## GLI PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS TEAM

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