

# [GLI]

**GREATER LOUISVILLE INC.**

The Metro Chamber of Commerce

— 2016 —

# FEDERAL PRIORITIES

THE VOICE OF THE  
REGIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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## GLI 2016 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

In an increasingly globalized world, no single regional economy can exist in isolation. Today's businesses require the freedom, flexibility, security and infrastructure to succeed. To this end, the following priorities represent needs of the Greater Louisville region to continue as a vibrant economic competitor on the global stage.

Increased access to capital along with improved technical assistance and capacity building for small business will ensure that our entrepreneurs have a supportive environment in which to innovate. Funding for early childhood and STEM education, higher caps on H-1B visas, and improved infrastructure will ensure that they have the tools they need to compete. Reforms to the Affordable Care Act and health care administration, along with funding for mental health and addiction, will ensure a healthy, productive workforce. A pro-growth tax code, reasonable environmental regulation, compensatory flexibility, and competitive labor regulations will ensure they have the freedom to succeed. Finally, the ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership will ensure that Greater Louisville businesses have every opportunity to benefit from competitive and free world trade.

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# GREATER LOUISVILLE INC.'S 2016 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES:

## **EPA and Government Regulation**

**Ease the burden imposed by onerous or unnecessary regulations on Greater Louisville's top industries.**

**Clean Power Plan** - GLI is concerned with the EPA's new regulations to reduce carbon emissions from power plants. These new regulations place an undue financial hardship on commercial and residential power consumers. Kentucky has long held a strong competitive advantage of low cost energy and this plan threatens that distinction.

**Waters of the U.S.** - GLI is also concerned about the EPA's expansion of the definition of the Waters of the United States for regulatory purposes. The EPA's final rule expanding the definition of Waters of the U.S. has far-reaching implications that are hazardous to the homebuilding, retail, farming, and energy sectors. GLI supports legislative efforts to clarify this definition without expanding it to the detriment of signature American industries.

**Expand Treatment for Drug Addiction and Mental Health**  
**Refocus on addressing drug addiction and mental health issues for reformed, productive citizens and give businesses access to qualified workers.**

**Drug Addiction and Rehabilitation** - GLI supports funding for comprehensive treatment and recovery from drug addiction, which is vital for ending the deadly epidemic of opioid addiction in our region. A focus on rehabilitation will give employers access to qualified workers by empowering those suffering from addiction to turn their lives around.

**Mental Health** - With over 1.2 million people in local, state, and federal custody who report some form of mental health problem, GLI is supportive of programs that would provide a treatment alternative to jail and prison sentences for those with mental health and substance abuse issues. Increased funding in these areas will not only end hardships for individuals, but will also alleviate financial burdens on taxpayers.

**Fund Education and Support Workforce Training**  
**Support increases in investment for our next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators, and employees.**

**Focus Funding for STEM** - Preparing the next generation to enter a globalized workforce that has an increased focus on science, technology, engineering, and math is critical to connecting businesses with qualified workers. STEM education and workforce programs are vital to filling open positions in the fastest growing portions of Greater Louisville's economy: health care and logistics.

**Funding for Early Childhood Education** - More than 80% of a child's brain development occurs before age 5. GLI supports increasing investment in early childhood education and development programs that will prepare children to learn in Kindergarten and beyond.

**Increase H1-B Visas** - While the U.S. works to educate the next generation of STEM employees, GLI supports increasing the H1-B Visa cap to connect businesses with highly-educated workers that will fill the need many businesses have in Greater Louisville for high-skilled, STEM positions.

**Keep Greater Louisville Globally Competitive**  
**Support and ease increased investment in small businesses, while ensuring all businesses have the trade and labor environment necessary to compete in the world economy.**

**Compensatory Practices** - GLI supports allowing private-sector employers the flexibility to offer employees compensatory time off as an alternative to monetary compensation for overtime work. This change will free employees to choose the best way to alleviate the difficulties of juggling work, home, family, and community, just as governments have for decades.

**Increase Access to Capital & Technical Assistance and Capacity Building** - GLI is supportive of easing access to capital and increased funding for technical assistance and capacity building through Small Business Development Centers.

**Fair Labor Proposals** - GLI opposes the increased threshold for employee exemption for overtime pay. The ruling decreases flexibility for businesses and employees, redefines the salary level for “white collar” to \$47,476, and burdens businesses with an estimated total implementation cost of \$592.7 million. Additionally, GLI opposes the new joint-employer standard because it discourages businesses from entering into franchise agreements. The rule has potential for unforeseen consequences because it holds businesses accountable for contracted work outside of their control.

**Reform Individual, Corporate, and Sales Tax Codes** - In the fast-paced and continually globalizing economy, the United States tax code has not kept up. GLI supports a tax code that is simple, competitive, fair, broad-based, and does not impose a disproportionate burden on any specific sector, industry, or activity.

**Trade Agreements** - GLI is supportive of advancing international trade in and out of Greater Louisville through the ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). To ensure fairness in free trade, GLI strongly encourages Congress to include provisions prohibiting currency manipulation.

## **Reform the Affordable Care Act (ACA) & Health Care Administration**

**Support reforms that would reduce undue burdens on employers, providers, states, and entrepreneurs.**

**30- vs. 40-Hour Workweek** - GLI supports a return of the 40-hour workweek that defines who is covered under the employer health care mandate.

**Cadillac Tax** - GLI supports a repeal of the Cadillac Tax, a 40% tax on individual and family health care plans above a certain threshold. By the year 2020, it is predicted that nearly all large-employer and union plans will be taxed at this rate.

**Medicare and Medicaid** - GLI opposes federal cuts to the Medicare and Medicaid programs due to the strain potential cuts would place on state budgets. GLI supports reforming these programs to control costs.

**Recovery Audit Contractor** - GLI supports the repeal or reform of the overly-complex Recovery Audit Contractor claims and appeals review process. Proposed replacements would include a flat retainer fee, similar to other Medicare contractors. Reforms or repeal of RAC's would relieve a significant administrative burden, allowing hospitals to provide better, more affordable high-quality care.

**The Medical Device Tax** - GLI opposes the provision of the ACA that places a tax on bulk sales of medical devices. A tax on medical providers stunts innovation and job creation that ends up hurting patients.

## **Support Transportation and Infrastructure Funding**

Continue to improve our multi-modal transportation and infrastructure networks to remain a world-class logistics hub.

**Funding for Aviation Systems** - Access to small and medium-sized airports stimulates regional economic growth. GLI urges a reauthorization of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and funding to support regional airport infrastructure.

**Inland Waterway Infrastructure** - With increased pressure on highway infrastructure, GLI recognizes the importance inland waterways will continue to play in domestic and international trade, especially with the widening of the Panama Canal. GLI supports preparations for increased inland waterway traffic through increased investment in waterways infrastructure.

**Modernize the Federal Fuels User Fee** - Funding for transportation improvements via a modernization of the Federal Fuels User Fee can be applied toward building and maintaining critical surface transportation projects, creating jobs for Americans, and stimulating economic growth.

**Surface Transportation** - GLI applauds the bipartisan effort taken to pass the FAST Act in order to replenish the Highway Trust Fund. We now call on Congress to ensure funding for the FAST Act and reforms to surface transportation and safety programs are allocated as written.

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## **PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP:**

GLI thanks the many individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to assist in business advocacy efforts. A special thanks is extended to those listed below who lead the Public Policy Council and its Issue Advisory Committees.

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