

# 2008

## Government Affairs Council Committee Positions

**Chairman:** Skin Edge, GeorgiaLink Public Affairs Group  
**Vice Chairman:** Haydon Stanley, Fiveash-Stanley

**At-Large** Don Cargill, J.D. Cargill & Associates  
**Appointments:** Ric Cobb, Georgia Petroleum Council

Joe Fleming, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs  
Georgia Chamber of Commerce

# Compliance

**Chair:** Roy Robinson, The R.B. Robinson Company

**Vice Chair:** Jean McRae, The Vaquer Firm

**Staff:** Lauren Wilkes, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** continues to support equitable and reasonable registration fees for lobbyists, for all organizations registering with the Ethics Commission regardless of whether they are for-profit or not-for-profit and opposes so-called “cup of coffee rules” and disclosure of fees and salaries of public affairs professionals.

# Economic Development and Tourism

**Chair:** Maria Zack, The Strollo Group

**Vice Chair:** Steve Allen, Georgia Power Company

**Staff:** Lauren Wilkes, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports efforts to put Georgia on a level-playing field with other states, especially those in the Southeast, by prohibiting disclosure of state and local incentives negotiated with businesses when discussing their potential plans for expansion or location in Georgia. Businesses have a right to know that confidential and proprietary information they disclose with state and local officials is protected and not subject to disclosure during time of sensitive negotiations.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports a significant increase in tourism funding to promote our state as a destination.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports legislation to bring Georgia in line with a majority of other states to allow private investments in venture capital funds by the state pension systems retirement

funds. As one of the few states in our nation that denies state pensions from investing in private investments, we send a poor signal to potential investors in our state.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports incentives and funding to encourage life sciences research and development in Georgia.

# Education

**Chair:** Mike Holiman, Cornerstone Communications Group

**Vice Chair:** Chandler Haydon, Haydon Consulting

**Staff:** Lauren Wilkes, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports adequate funding for all levels of education and full implementation of the lower pupil-teacher ratio in grades K-12 as required by Georgia law.

**The Georgia Chamber** opposes attempts to cut funding in the Quick Start program for existing industry.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** is committed to development of a meaningful “workforce readiness” certification program that will allow local communities to demonstrate to potential and existing businesses that they have a trained and ready workforce prepared to go to work.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports adequate funding for the Georgia Department of Technical & Adult Education and the Georgia Department of Education Division of Career, Technical & Agriculture Education.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports “merit pay” for teachers, based on established performance criteria.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports strengthening teacher quality by providing a high quality research-based induction for every new teacher throughout their first three years and developing a comprehensive plan for restructuring teacher compensation.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports the full funding of the University System of Georgia funding formula. The Chamber urges the Board of Regents, the Governor and the General Assembly to provide more flexibility, allowing the research universities to be

# Environment, Energy, Natural Resources and Water Management

**Chair:** Bo Moore, McKenna Long & Aldridge

**Vice Chair:** Allen Richardson, Georgia-Pacific Corporation

**Staff:** Nick Pearson, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports a statewide, common sense water management plan that balances the needs of the existing and future growth with the goal to protect our environment.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports and defends regulated Riparian Rights under current law as an important tool in managing the public and private interests in state water.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports state and federal efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, as a matter of national security and economic stability.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports enactment of legislation that would require that an economic impact analysis on compliance costs be conducted on any proposed environmental regulation, prior to its being voted upon by the Board of the Department of Natural Resources or otherwise implemented by the Environmental Protection Division, or environmental legislation, prior to its consideration for passage by the General Assembly.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** believes that the Environmental Protection Division should be funded from the

general revenues of the State because the benefits of such operation inure to the benefit of the entire State. The state Chamber also believes that where fees are required to operate a federally mandated environmental program, such fees should be based solely upon the actual cost to administer that program and be allocated equitably among those subject to the program.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the reauthorization of the Scrap Tire Management Fee, as the funding source for the Solid Waste Trust Fund, to aid state and local efforts to reduce solid waste, recycle and cleanup scrap tires, and prevent litter. Furthermore, the Chamber urges the General Assembly to appropriate fees collected for the Trust Fund for their statutorily intended use and that the Governor's budget reflect such dedication.

## Federal Affairs

**Chair:** Jay Morgan, J.L. Morgan Company, Inc.

**Vice Chair:** Clint Austin, ConnectSouth Public Affairs

**Staff:** Nick Pearson, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** urges Congress to address the issue of illegal immigration, securing our borders, but also providing an expedited and streamlined process to citizenship.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports state and federal efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy, as a matter of national security and economic stability, including the location and development of OCS supply sources.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports a comprehensive review of the federal Endangered Species Act and the amendment of the existing law to require a cost/benefit analysis and "peer reviewed" science.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports permanent elimination of the capital gains tax.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports permanent elimination of the death tax.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the elimination of the personal and corporate alternative minimum tax.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports amendments to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act that will reduce the disproportionate costs of compliance and eliminate unintended consequences.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the funding necessary for Medicare and other federally funded programs, so that healthcare providers remain strong and viable economic engines in order to serve their communities.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** is aware of the Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Rule revising the NAAQS for ozone and strongly opposes revising the primary or secondary ozone standard to any level below the current standard.

# Healthcare

**Chair:** Kevin Curtin, AT&T

**Vice Chair:** Sheila Humberstone, Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** opposes any new mandates on insurers or employers that require coverage because they raise costs to employers and employees.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislative efforts to address issues related to uninsured and uninsurable Georgians, but will oppose efforts to pay for such programs through taxes or mandatory fees on business.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports increasing the level of Medicaid and Peach Care funding for healthcare providers so that these providers are fully reimbursed for the cost of the care provided and thus no losses are shifted to private payors, the business community or local governments.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports policies, programs, and government payments for continued viability of rural, critical access, and safety net hospitals.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports public and private programs to address the physician and health workforce shortage.

Hospitals are essential to the economic development, welfare and stability of our state, are the largest employer in many Georgia communities, and are an integral part of the delivery of quality healthcare to Georgians. **The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports inclusion of all hospitals, single specialty hospitals, imaging centers, and ambulatory surgery centers under the same Certificate of Need laws currently applicable to Georgia hospitals, including the requirement for indigent care and Medicaid participation. In addition, the current law should be streamlined by adopting all the procedural recommendations on which the CON Commission reached unanimous agreement.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports strengthening Georgia self-referral laws to address over-utilization and to ensure a fair distribution among providers of insured patients.

# Judiciary

**Chair:** Kirk McGhee, Kirk McGhee, P.C. Attorney at Law

**Vice Chair:** Robb Willis, Troutman Sanders Public Affairs Group

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** strongly supports private property rights and will oppose legislative attempts to outlaw employment policies/agreements that ask an employee not to bring their gun to work.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** will oppose all attempts to weaken legal and tort reform legislation adopted by the Georgia General Assembly and signed by the Governor in 2005.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation that permits the admission into evidence of the failure to wear a seat belt as prima facie evidence of a contributory factor in considering the award of medical and other damages. Georgia law

requires the use of seat belts, yet the failure to comply cannot be admitted into evidence in our courtrooms.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation that limits corporate and management liability in civil actions for the negligent actions of workers when those actions are contrary to corporate policy or committed without the approval or knowledge of management.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation that will limit liability in civil cases involving workplace violence to the individual who performs the criminal act.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the extension of Daubert standards to hearings before the Environment Protection Division, workers' compensation and other agencies' boards.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation to reform premises liability laws to allow juries to apportion fault on jury forms. By placing on the jury verdict forms everyone who might be culpable, we empower our juries to make fairer decisions based on the facts of a case, not on who has the financial ability to pay.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation that provides "good Samaritan" protections for businesses that render aid in times of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, pandemic diseases or other emergencies. Currently individuals are protected from litigation when trying to help others in emergencies. This protection should be extended to business to enhance our state's ability to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies with private as well as public resources.

# Small Business

**Chair:** Chuck McMullen, Piedmont Public Affairs

**Vice Chair:** David Raynor, NFIB Georgia

**Staff:** Lauren Wilkes, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports repeal of the ad valorem inventory state tax, which will keep Georgia competitive with neighboring states by allowing local governments to exempt items that are part of a business' inventory from local ad valorem taxes.

**The Georgia Chamber** reaffirms its support for the annual sales tax holiday.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports legislation permitting sales for the off-premise consumption of alcohol every day of the week.

**The Georgia Chamber** supports small business tax credits to off-set healthcare cost.

# Taxation and Business Incentives

**Chair:** Terry Lawler, CompuCredit Corporation

**Vice Chair:** Guy Griswold, Griswold Lesser Public Affairs

**Staff:** Nick Pearson, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports a legislative tax agenda that provides a stable, predictable, and competitive revenue system, one that also encourages economic growth, entrepreneurial enterprise and prosperity.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the repeal of the sales tax on energy used in manufacturing processes.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the adoption and application of the "integrated plant theory," which

would exempt the sales tax on all machinery and equipment that is necessary and integral to the manufacturing process.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports the improvement of the BEST program to allow companies that have earned credits through their investment in the state to realize any stranded credits as an offset against their Georgia payroll tax liability.

# Technology and General Business

**Chair:** Earl Rogers, Georgia Hospital Association

**Vice Chair:** Brenda Jones, CheckFree Corporation

**Staff:** Lauren Wilkes, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports legislation that allows market-force principles to work in the state's economy. Government should not set pricing for business products and services and the Chamber supports the concept that more competition best serves Georgia's economy and speeds products and innovation to the market.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports market-based solutions free from unnecessary government regulation or rule.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** will oppose any legislation that interferes with private, voluntarily agreed upon contracts between consumers and businesses.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports policies that foster investment in technology and technological research and public policy that promotes innovation, competition and business growth on the Internet.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** opposes any attempt to implement "outsourcing laws," which mandate where Georgia businesses must locate their facilities. The Chamber opposes

legislative and regulatory restrictions that would limit the ability of the State of Georgia and businesses operating in Georgia to compete globally.

# Transportation

**Chair:** Kevin Perry, Georgia Beverage Association

**Vice Chair:** Michael Wall, Comcast

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** supports significant increases in transportation funding based on comprehensive planning to incorporate all modes of transportation. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce reaffirms its long-standing support for appropriations for infrastructure and facility improvements for our ports systems, which is vital for Georgia to remain competitive globally and domestically.

# Workers' Compensation, Labor and Employment

**Chair:** John Poole, Poole & Dunn Management Services

**Vice Chair:** Craig Camuso, CSX Transportation

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** will strongly oppose any legislation that attempts to eliminate or weaken Georgia's "right to work" laws.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** has a long-standing position of support of Georgia's "employment at will" doctrine and will work to protect against any changes to it.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** will continue to uphold workers' compensation as the exclusive remedy for workplace injuries and opposes any attempt to statutorily index the maximum income benefits under workers' compensation that creates an entitlement with no control mechanism.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** opposes the coverage of "psychological injuries" covered under our workers' compensation system, without accompaniment of a physical injury.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** opposes any expansion in coverage of Georgia's unemployment insurance system beyond its original intent to provide a bridge for employees who lose their job due to no fault of their own and who are actively seeking re-employment.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** upholds the right of employers to ensure a safe, drug-free workplace.

**The Georgia Chamber of Commerce** opposes an increase in the minimum wage above and beyond recent changes made at the Federal level. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce believes economic stability and growth are important for the continued vitality of Georgia and its people. Therefore mandated wages and employment benefits, which create disparities between local governments, produce an anti-competitive marketplace that has a negative effect upon job growth, business relocation and expansion.

---

*The publication of the 2008 Georgia Chamber of Commerce Legislative Agenda is culmination of a lengthy process, which begins with listening to the concerns of the members of the Georgia Chamber and statewide "Listening Sessions" with local business and civic leaders and local chambers of commerce. Recommended legislative and policy positions are then discussed, debated and approved by the 12 committees of the Government Affairs Council, and presented to the Officers of the Georgia Chamber and its Board of Directors for their approval.*

***This Legislative Agenda includes, but is not limited to, issues that may appear in the 2008 Georgia Chamber of Commerce Legislative Voting Record.***