



greater
williamsburg
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2024 Legislative Priorities





Dear Members of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber,

It is my great honor to serve as the President and CEO of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce and to lead its efforts to maintain our mission to “Advocate, collaborate, and create an environment in which business can grow and succeed.” I have been working with our many volunteer members who embrace our mission and put in many hours each month in support of it.

One of the top benefits of being a Greater Williamsburg Chamber member is the advocacy effort that is put forth by staff and membership. I have once again engaged lobbyists who will advocate for our priorities before the Virginia General Assembly during the 2023 session. Many of you will recognize Cassidy Taylor, who has previously represented us before the Virginia General Assembly. She will join Emily Reynolds and Mindy Carlin, co-owner of Access Point Public Affairs to represent us as our lobbyist this year. I am pleased to have them working closely with me and our Legislative Affairs Committee as we collaborate with like-minded groups to maintain and grow a business-friendly environment in the Commonwealth.

We closed the 2023 Legislative Survey of our membership on Tuesday, November 28th. The results are tallied, the 2023 Greater Williamsburg Legislative Agenda has been drafted by the Legislative Affairs Committee, and it has been approved by the Board. The top 5 priorities as confirmed by members who responded to the survey are listed below. Each provides examples of what the GWCC would support under these priorities; however, they are not exhaustive lists. As legislation is introduced, it may fall under the priority topics adopted by the Chamber.

Enjoy your holidays, your families, and great success in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Terry Banez
President & CEO
Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce



Dear Members of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber,

As has been our process for the last few years, the Greater Williamsburg Chamber's Legislative Affairs Committee has surveyed membership to determine our legislative priorities for the upcoming session. This serves three purposes.

- First, the Greater Williamsburg Chamber has grown by number of members and in service. What I mean by this is, the growth in membership and members' broad range of professions signaled an expanded level of service and thus, value of membership. Not only have we expanded programming to benefit our fellow members, but we also expanded representation before the Virginia General Assembly on topics that affect our Chamber members.
- Second, our members' businesses cover an array of professions. Surveying membership allows our Chamber's leadership and the Legislative Affairs Committee to understand what issues broadly affect us so we can act upon them through advocacy and education.
- Third, to continue growing value for members and staff alike, our president, Terry Banez has undertaken raising the Chamber's profile by working to achieve five-start accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Advocacy is a large part of achieving that accreditation and will bring more resources and opportunities to the Greater Williamsburg Chamber.

Below are the priorities that have been distilled from responses to the survey by our GWCC members who chose to participate. They contain brief descriptions of the type of legislation that would fall under them. Terry Banez, has continued our relationship with Access Point Public Affairs for advocacy before the General Assembly. Mindy Carlin, founder and co-owner, and her associates, Emily Reynolds and Cassidy Taylor, are the team assigned to the Chamber's advocacy efforts. We are so lucky to have them!

I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of our Chamber in the coming year. I ask for your active support and participation in the legislative process and in the committee process of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce. Your willingness to volunteer your time and talent, when and where you can, is greatly appreciated! Let's work together to deliver on the mission of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce:

"Advocate, collaborate, and create an environment in which business can grow and succeed."

Angie Bezik
Chair, Legislative Affairs Committee
Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce



Support Improvements to the Education System to Create a Well-Trained, Skilled Workforce

- Build significant and meaningful partnerships between the business community, K-12 schools, and higher education to support improvements in the education system.

Build Talent Pathways for In Demand Jobs that Include Work Based Learning and Credentialing Opportunities

- Promote talent pathways for Virginia's current and future workforce that include educator-employer collaboration, curriculum alignment with workforce needs, and internships and other work-based learning experiences.
- Support programs that increase employability, skills development, and educational attainment for adults, such as veterans and displaced workers.
- Support the development of career and technical education pathways that integrate high school and post-secondary education and training to encourage work-based learning opportunities and lead to essential skills jobs in Virginia.

Improve Literacy Rates Among Virginia Students

- Support initiatives and investments that address learning loss and improve literacy rates among Virginia students.
- Invest in and increase access to quality early childhood education to set our children on a path to success.

Improve Access to Affordable Housing Options to Meet Workforce Needs

- Expand and support initiatives and programs to promote the development and redevelopment of affordable, quality housing for all.
- Streamline and improve permitting processes and address other land use issues and constraints that negatively impact the construction and housing industries.



Increase Funding and Access to Broadband

- Increase financial support for public-private partnerships to facilitate broadband deployment in underserved and unserved areas.
- Support efforts to prepare workers for the advancement of broadband investments and initiatives.

Maintain a Business-Friendly Climate and Invest in and Continue to Develop a Safe, Reliable, Efficient, Multimodal Transportation Network

- Protect Virginia's Right-To-Work law.
- Protect against measures that would increase the burden of excessive litigation and diminish Virginia's competitive position.
- Support continued identification and maintenance of dedicated and sustainable funding for critical transportation priorities that recognize the ongoing pressures of state and federal budgets.
- Ensure transportation funding levels and funding allocation mechanisms are fair and equitable.
- Support policies that ensure Virginia's transportation network increases mobility and access to employment, education, and commercial opportunities for all.



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