



MONTANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROSPERITY PLAN

2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Montana Chamber of Commerce is the state's leading business advocate and the driving force in promoting a favorable business climate. The Montana Chamber will focus its legislative efforts on the four core objectives of Envision 2026.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

The Montana Chamber was founded to promote a healthy, robust business climate. We will advance several proposals to make Montana a more attractive place to do business.

ENACT LIABILITY PROTECTIONS SPECIFIC TO COVID-19

- » Pass legislation that limits the liability of responsible businesses, health care providers, and manufacturers that are vital to the state's recovery from the pandemic.

EXTEND MONTANA'S EMPLOYEE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

- » In the absence of at-will employment in our state, employers may terminate an employment relationship for any legal reason during a probationary period before Montana's unique wrongful discharge laws apply. Changing the standard probationary period from six months to a year doubles the timeline for an employer to evaluate the new employee's fit and performance.

REVISE REGULATORY REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

- » Promote legislation and/or executive-driven initiatives that will institutionalize checks and balances on the growth of regulations that impact industry.

SIMPLIFY TAX CODE AND EXPAND TAXPAYER RIGHTS

- » Provisions include income tax simplification, extending the timeline for a taxpayer to protest an assessment, eligibility for legal fee reimbursement if the taxpayer prevails on the merit of an appeal, and more.

CLARIFY TRESPASSER LIABILITY FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

- » The *Montana Trespasser Responsibility Act* will align Montana with other states that provide that a landowner owes no duty of care to a trespasser except in certain cases of negligence.

ELIMINATE "PHANTOM DAMAGES" FROM MEDICAL EXPENSE RECOVERIES

- » Brings fairness to the calculation used to determine economic damages for medical expenses in personal injury litigation and will help to reduce liability and healthcare costs.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Montana Chamber is committed to maintaining our state's status as a leader in entrepreneurship. By advancing productive legislation we can help Montanans start, grow, and keep their business here.

INCENTIVIZE BUSINESS INVESTMENT

- » Evaluate and support proposed tax credits, loan programs, payment deferrals, and other incentives that draw investment into underrepresented industries in Montana.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Hiring and retaining a skilled workforce remains a top challenge for Montana businesses, and the Montana Chamber is committed to working with the legislature to pass creative policy solutions.

CONTINUE FUNDING PROVEN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMMING

- » Additional funding for programs like the Advanced Opportunity Act and Transformational Learning will deliver personalized CTE opportunities for middle school and high school students, and promote work-based learning to assist employers with workforce recruitment.

UTILIZE SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA AND STARTUP FUNDS TO INCENTIVIZE CTE

- » Support K-12 and 2-year colleges that implement CTE programming with a funding bonus per enrolled student and any additional startup capital to help schools afford the necessary equipment for those programs.

CREATE ALTERNATIVE ACCREDITATION PATHWAYS FOR TEACHERS

- » Providing for reasonable flexibility in the steps required to become a teacher, especially in the trades, will expand the pool of talent to instruct Montana's next generation of workers. Policy proposals include streamlining the licensure process and subscribing Montana to interstate reciprocity for teachers to transfer certifications.

CLARIFY LIABILITY FOR BUSINESSES PARTICIPATING IN WORK-BASED LEARNING

- » Deliver certainty to businesses that are interested in engaging students at their workplace with meaningful programming, but are concerned about liability.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

In partnership with the Montana Infrastructure Coalition, the Montana Chamber will advocate for critical-need infrastructure to improve commerce for all industry.

PASS BONDING BILL FOR STATEWIDE PROJECTS

- » Montana can still take advantage of favorable interest rates to advance critical-need projects, especially with the new borrowing framework in place (HB 553; 2019).

PROTECT EXISTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOOLS TO MAINTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE

- » Tax increment financing, entitlement share, and other proven resources at local governments' disposal are essential to maintain critical-need infrastructure assets in Montana communities.

View a complete list of our **Envision 2026** goals and achievements at:
www.ENVISION2026.com



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