



**ADVOCACY IN ACTION:
First Quarter 2010 Report**

As a business organization made up of nearly 2,600 businesses and more than 118,000 individuals, being a part of The Chamber is much more than a smart investment in your business, it's an opportunity to make a difference in the community.

Through our advocacy program, The Chamber represents business interests before the local, state and federal government. Here are just a few examples of the actions we took in the first quarter of 2010 on your behalf:

The Business Voice at the Local Level:

Third Class Cities Initiative. Recently, there has been media attention centered on the plight of third class cities in the state, of which the City of Lancaster is one. In response, The Chamber established a Third Class Cities Task Force to determine the role, if any, for Chamber involvement. The Task Force reviewed policy issues relating to the fiscal sustainability and structural challenges of third class cities, and worked with regional chambers and elected officials to explore potential solutions.

This past month, the Task Force made a series of **recommendations** to our Board of Directors that calls on The Chamber to play a lead role in developing solutions to this crisis. This year, The Chamber will continue to work in conjunction with at least five regional chambers, with others expected to join the cause. We will work with our regional partners to advocate for reforms that will free cities from outdated and overbearing state mandates.

Area Code Shortage. The Chamber **testified** at a hearing hosted by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on the 717 area code shortage on behalf of business. The PUC predicts the 717 area code will run out of serviceable numbers by the fall of 2012, and two possible solutions are, (1) an "overlay" in which new numbers would get a new area code and all local calls would require 10-digit dialing; or (2) a "split" where boundaries would be drawn - in which case Lancaster County would mostly likely be split. The Chamber polled our membership and found nearly 70 percent favor the "overlay," as it would be the least disruptive and least financially burdensome to existing businesses. The survey results were shared with the PUC at the hearing.

Building Relationships. In an effort to build and maintain strong relationships and open communication with our legislators, The Chamber leadership meets regularly with elected officials to discuss relevant business and community issues. The Chamber's leadership team met with the state delegation in February to express great concern over the Governor's proposed tax on professional services and other important issues, such as transportation and state pensions. A meeting with the County Commissioners and County Administrator is scheduled for mid-April to discuss more local issues.

As a Chamber member, it's important that you help us establish a working relationship and dialogue with our elected leaders. To help you, The Chamber has interactive tools so you can become familiar with the major issues. Stay connected and utilize The Chamber's continuously updated **website** for ways to get involved. And don't forget that **Chamber staff** is just an email or phone call away, whether you have questions or require additional information on specific topics.

In addition, we provide many opportunities throughout the year to meet with elected officials at all levels of government to educate them on issues important to business. In fact, in mid-June, The Lancaster Chamber will partner with the PA Chamber in "Chamber Day on the Hill." This day-long program is an opportunity to meet directly with the Lancaster County delegation and participate in issue briefings with key government leaders. If you are interested in attending this complimentary program, please contact **David Greineder**, advocacy director. You can also **easily access** your local delegation at any time through emails, letters and phone calls.

The Business Voice at the State Level:

State Budget Position. The Chamber Board recently adopted a strongly-worded [position](#) calling for a fiscally responsible state budget that aligns revenues with expenses. Further, the policy opposes the Governor's proposal to lower the state sales tax rate from 6 to 4 percent, while broadening it to include 74 tax-exempt items, including professional services.

The Chamber is engaged in a campaign in opposition to the proposed business taxes and we ask you to [join us](#) in our fight. If you have comments or testimonials that you would be willing to share regarding the impact of the sales tax expansion on your business, please contact [David Greineder](#), advocacy director.

State Pensions. The state has known for years that taxpayers will be responsible for covering billions in pension liabilities in 2012, but little action has been taken. That is why the Board unanimously approved a [position](#) calling on the state to immediately address the fiscal issues surrounding the state pension system. The Chamber also submitted a letter to the [editor](#) on the subject, which was published in the Lancaster Newspapers.

Farm Equipment. The Chamber prides itself on being an active partner of our farmers and supporting agricultural economic opportunities. To that end, the Board adopted a [policy](#) in support of updating the vehicle code to allow farmers to travel on public roads at night. Current law prohibits travel on roadways after sunset for vehicles more than 8 feet wide and does not take into consideration new safety features on modern-day equipment. We are working with state legislators and stakeholders to craft legislation that will update the law to reflect 21st Century farming practices.

The Business Voice at the Federal Level:

Card Check. Don't believe the Card Check issue is over. Compromise efforts and attempts to attach legislative language to other bills could come up at any time. The bottom line is the business community must stay vigilant on this issue and continue to express opposition.

To that end, The Chamber participated in a U.S. Chamber program where we took the business voice directly to the halls of Congress. And for the second year in a row, The Lancaster Chamber had the largest local delegation in the entire nation.

Close to 300 business leaders from eight states met with government officials to tell them how Card Check will negatively impact their business. Our delegation met with Senator Arlen Specter, a key vote and leader of a compromise effort, and Senator Bob Casey, a clear "yes vote." We told them how the legislation would harm businesses and disputed the position that the bill would benefit employees, employers and the economy. We also met with legislative staff from Congressman Pitts' office where we had the opportunity to express our thanks for his continued opposition to this bill.

The Chamber will not waiver in our advocacy efforts against Card Check. We encourage you to help us by [contacting](#) our elected officials. Please get involved, communicate your concerns to Specter and Casey. And don't forget to thank Representative Pitts!

Health Insurance Reform. From the beginning, The Chamber has been in front of the health insurance reform debate. We expressed [concern](#) in writing and in-person on the impact the legislation will have on the business community.

Now that the legislation is law, we intend to provide educational forums where experts will discuss what is contained in the bill and what businesses need to know. In fact, our next Wake Up to the Issues Forum on April 22 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Eden Resort will discuss that very issue. We will have a representative from McNeese Wallace & Nurick who will review the major provisions and provide insight on how the legislation will impact business. The Forum is sure to sell-out quickly, so [Click Here](#) to register today.

Jobs Bill Tax Incentives. Don't forget about the business tax incentives contained in the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act. The bill provides a temporary payroll tax holiday for businesses that hire previously unemployed workers; provides for capital expense deductions; and includes a retention tax credit. For detailed information about the business incentives, [Click Here](#).

For More Information:

Belonging to The Chamber serves as the best insurance against laws and regulations that could stifle your business profitability. This year is sure to have its own challenges, so please keep up the good work and continue to use your Chamber membership to your advantage. If you have any questions about The Chamber's advocacy program, please contact [David Greineder](#), advocacy director.