



## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: Second Quarter 2010 Report

As a business organization made up of nearly 2,600 businesses and more than 116,000 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 this past quarter on your behalf:

---

### The Business Voice at the Local Level:

---

**Third Class Cities Task Force.** As mentioned in the last advocacy report, The Chamber established a "Third Class Cities Task Force" made up of business leaders to learn about the challenges facing Third Class Cities across all dimensions and discuss the role of The Chamber in addressing the underlying issues. Further, The Chamber is heavily involved in a coalition of regional chambers working to develop policy positions that seek to reform the structure of government for our cities. The coalition is putting the final touches on policies we believe will free cities from burdensome state mandates and give them tools to become fiscally sound. With the help of our Advocacy Council and Board, the Task Force will develop a "plan of action" around the policies, which we will work to build broad support for throughout the state and advance in Harrisburg. This initiative will take the concerted effort of all concerned Chamber members, so please stay tuned to future Chamber news to learn how you can get involved.

**Transportation Task Force.** The Legislature is currently in a special session designed to tackle the growing funding challenges facing our transportation network. This is why The Chamber formed a task force made up of business leaders charged with developing a "vision" for Lancaster County's transportation network for the 21st Century, and begin the process of advancing very specific long-term projects. Our goal is to make sure we are funding local projects that have the most need and the most long-term impact from a business perspective. The work of the Task Force will be reported in future Chamber publications, so please make sure you are plugged into Chamber news outlets.

**Harrisburg Pike.** Last year, The Chamber worked diligently to help prepare a \$91.5 million federal grant application for the Harrisburg Pike Corridor, from Prince Street in Lancaster City to State Road in East Hempfield Township. While those efforts were not successful, The Chamber is involved in a new effort, on a reduced scale, to secure federal funding for the Corridor in "round 2" of the grant program. The nearly \$40 million grant application will seek funding for projects such as the Route 30/Harrisburg Pike Interchange; a bike and pedestrian walkway from the City to Long's Park; and connecting various City streets. The application will be submitted by the MPO in August and awards will be announced by the U.S. Department of Transportation by September 15. Rest assured The Chamber will do all we can to support the application for this worthy project.

**Building Relationships.** The Chamber continues to build relationships with elected officials and policymakers on behalf of the business community. This past quarter, our advocacy leadership team has been hard at work. We met with representatives from the Lancaster County Tax Collection Bureau to discuss upcoming reporting and remitting requirements of the tax collection consolidation legislation (Act 32) and how we can partner to help business navigate the law. We met with our state legislative delegation and County commissioners to discuss local issues of importance. We participated in "Chamber Day on the Hill," an opportunity for local chambers to band our collective strength and advance business-related issues in Harrisburg. We met with U.S. Senate candidate Pat Toomey to discuss topics such as Card Check, healthcare reform, the federal budget, earmarks and financial regulations. And we met with

Congressman Joe Pitts to talk about critical national issues and the need for a policy agenda in Washington, D.C. Additionally, we questioned the gubernatorial candidates on Chamber [priority issues](#).

As this election cycle moves forward, The Chamber will provide plenty more opportunities for business leaders to ask questions of candidates in high-priority races. The Chamber does not endorse candidates, but actively encourages dialogue between business leaders and candidates.

---

### The Business Voice at the State Level:

---

**State Budget.** The Legislature passed a \$28 billion budget proposal, on time. The Chamber is pleased to report that thanks, in part, to our grassroots advocacy, the proposal to broaden the sales tax to cover business services is not part of the final plan. According to The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, 80-90% of professional services are borne by small business, which means many of our members would have been the most affected had the proposal passed. Your participation in our grassroots effort to defeat this proposal is greatly appreciated.

Throughout the budget process, The Chamber remained committed to the spirit of our current [policy statement](#) that asserts the need to make Pennsylvania a more business-friendly state and our message of "less taxes and less spending." The Chamber does have concerns with the budget, however, namely the assumptions that the federal government will approve \$850 million in funds and the \$800 million Mcare liability. To read the full statement, [Click Here](#).

**Industry Partnerships.** The state Senate is considering legislation that would establish "industry partnerships" as an official program and formalize a funding stream in the budget. Industry partnerships connect companies with local workforce investment boards that identify common workforce needs and provide training. The Chamber Board approved a [policy position statement](#) that supports the concept of industry partnerships and recognizes the success of Lancaster County programs. Due to our [position](#) on fiscal discipline, The Chamber would only support funding for industry partnerships in a manner that could be proven consistent with our policy.

**State Pension Reform.** Recently, The House passed a pension reform bill, HB 2497, which seeks to address the massive pension liability looming in 2012. The bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee for consideration. This year, The Chamber strongly encouraged policymakers to address the fiscal issues surrounding the state and public school pension system. Per our [position](#), The Chamber believes the bill takes good first steps, but does not go far enough in its current form to address more serious structural issues. We are hopeful this is the beginning of more meaningful reform which will implement the other areas we have suggested in our position.

**Farm Equipment Transportation.** The Chamber prides itself as being an active partner of our farming community and strongly supports 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. We wrote a [letter](#) to House and Senate Leadership urging them to consider the bill, as we believe it is a step in the right direction for updating the vehicle code to align with modern farming practices.

---

### The Business Voice at the Federal Level:

---

**Card Check.** Card Check continues to be a top priority issue for The Chamber, despite the loss of attention in the media. The fact of the matter is compromise efforts and attempts to attach legislative language to other bills could come up at any time, either before or immediately after the General Election in November. The business community must stay vigilant and continue to express opposition to the proposal in its current form and opposition to all possible alternatives.

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

**Health Insurance Reform.** From the beginning, The Chamber has been in front of the health insurance reform debate. The Chamber was proud to host a record crowd at our April Wake Up to the Issues Forum on the reform law. Experts provided an overview of the bill's impact on the private sector and broader community, and local experts provided perspective on the impact to the healthcare and insurance industries. Moving forward, one of our main priorities is to inform members of how the law will impact the way they do business now and in the future. To view the materials from the Forum, [Click Here](#). The Chamber extends our thanks to Congressman Joe Pitts for his co-sponsorship of H.R. 5141, the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act, which would repeal the expensive and burdensome 1099 reporting requirement included in the healthcare bill for incorporated businesses. [Click Here](#) to send your thanks as well.

---

### 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.