

Your Fight, Our Fight

The following are highlights of some key legislative issues the Michigan Chamber took action on during the 2019-20 legislative session on behalf of its members.

Employer Rights



Reform Work Search Requirements For Unemployment Benefits

SB 812

The Michigan Chamber supported legislation to make reasonable modifications to Michigan's work search requirements to promote getting claimants off unemployment benefits quicker and saving the 100% employer-financed system millions of dollars.

Public Act 83 of 2020



Provide Unemployment Insurance Relief Related to COVID Claims

SB 886 and SB 604

The Michigan Chamber supported legislation specify that employers' unemployment accounts will not be charged COVID-19 related claims. The legislation also expanded the ability for employers to take advantage of the state's Work Share program, which helps employers avoid layoffs by reducing hours and having employees collect partial unemployment benefits to make up a portion of the lost wages.

Public Acts 229 and 258 of 2020



Fund an Unemployment Benefit Extension for Workers Displaced by COVID-19

SB 748

The Michigan Chamber supported legislation to provide state funding for an additional six weeks of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for claimants filing for benefits between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2021. The appropriation was made by the Legislature in recognition of the strain the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the 100 percent employer-financed UI Trust Fund and because many claimants are on the unemployment rolls due to government shutdown orders.

Governor vetoed after legislative approval





Repeal Right to Work Law - BLOCKED

HB 4033 and HB 4034

The Michigan Chamber opposes repeal of Michigan's Right to Work Law, which ensures workplace fairness and equality by giving every employee the ability to decide for themselves if joining or financially supporting a union is the right choice for them.

Blocked in committee



Increase Minimum Wage - BLOCKED

SB 233

The Michigan Chamber opposes efforts to increase the minimum wage to \$16 per hour. Michigan already has one of the highest minimum wage rates in the country. Any further increases would make Michigan uncompetitive in the race for jobs and force many employers to cut back staffing hours, increase prices or reduce other investments in employees or the business.

Blocked in committee



Mandatory Overtime Pay - BLOCKED

HB 5036 and SB 542

The Michigan Chamber opposes efforts to increase employees the salary threshold under which employees must be paid overtime for hours over 40. This proposal takes the salary threshold too high (\$54,964), too fast and comes on the heels of a significant increase of the federal overtime threshold.

Blocked in committee

Legal Reform



COVID-19 Liability Protections for Businesses

HBs 6030-32 and SB 1258

The Michigan Chamber led the charge on common sense legislation to assure that employers in all sectors who take reasonable steps to follow public health guidelines will be protected against needless lawsuits. The legislation also would protect companies who have stepped up to produce critically needed personal protection equipment (PPE).

Public Acts 236-38 and 339 of 2020





COVID-19 Medical Malpractice Liability

SB 899

The Michigan Chamber supported legislation to provide temporary and limited liability protections for health care facilities who stepped up during unprecedented times to aid Michiganders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bill vetoed by Governor Whitmer

Education and Workforce Readiness



Promote Upskilling of Displaced Workers to Address Employer Needs

HB 5576, HB 5580 and SB 268

The Michigan Chamber supported the creation of the “Michigan Reconnect Program” which provides grants to displaced workers to attain a post-secondary degree or certification. All across Michigan employers are struggling to find the skilled workforce they demand to remain successful. Through the Michigan Reconnect Program, job seekers can gain the skills they need to fill the jobs employers have available.

Public Acts 68, 69 and 84 of 2020



Provide Resources for the GoingPro Talent Fund

HB 5396

The Michigan Chamber supported fully funding the GoingPro Training Program. The GoingPRO program provides job training grants to businesses to support training for current and new employees in high-demand, skilled trades industries. The GoingPro program has proven to be successful in responding to the talent needs of Michigan employers and deserves continued financial support.

Public Act 166 of 2020

Environment



Anti-Business Environmental Regulation – BLOCKED

SB 1154

The Michigan Chamber believes businesses should be protected from burdensome regulations and oversight. In 2018 the Chamber successfully fought for changes that would make it easier for the business to comply with environmental regulations and contaminant cleanups in a safe and transparent manner. This bill attempted to strike out those requirements.

Blocked in Committee



Tax Policy



Graduated Income Tax – BLOCKED

HJR 5

The Michigan Chamber opposes any attempt to repeal Michigan’s constitutionally protected flat rate income tax in exchange for a graduated income tax. Our state’s flat rate income tax is applied equally to all income earners whereas a graduated income tax would apply increasingly higher tax rates to individuals with increasing income levels. A graduated income tax punishes success, discourages investment and diminishes the entrepreneurial spirit.

Blocked in committee



Artificially Inflating Property Taxes – BLOCKED

HB 4025, HB 4047, SB 26 and SB 29

The Michigan Chamber opposes any measure to manipulate the property tax system to yield higher taxes. Any attempt to artificially inflate property values and prevent taxpayers from appealing unfair valuations run contrary to a fair and equitable property tax system.

Blocked in committee



Small Business Tax Increase – BLOCKED

HB 4781

The Michigan Chamber opposes doubling the tax on small businesses.

Blocked committee



COVID-19 Related Financial Relief

HB 5761, HB 5810, SB 935-7 and SB 943

After Governor Whitmer started forcing business closures and severe occupancy restrictions via executive order, the Michigan Chamber immediately began pursuing several proposals to offer financial relief to impacted businesses. Largely in the form of tax deferments, the Chamber recognized the need to provide a hand up (not a handout) to those job providers who need it most.

Governor vetoed after legislative approval



Chamber Contact

To learn more about the Michigan Chamber's effort to support free enterprise and businesses across the state, contact our Advocacy Team:

Wendy Block

Vice President of Business Advocacy and Membership Engagement
wblock@michamber.com

Dan Papineau

Director of Tax Policy & Regulatory Affairs
dpapineau@michamber.com

Mike Alaimo

Director of Environmental & Energy Affairs
malaimo@michamber.com



MICHIGAN

CHAMBER

of Commerce