

# UNDER THE DOME

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## The Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

is pleased to present you with our:

### ***2007 Business (Legislative) Agenda***

#### **Taxation:**

**T**he Coalition supports tax policy that allows Rhode Island to remain competitive nationwide.

- The Chambers oppose any unnecessary or unreasonable increase in state taxes.
- The Chambers support any responsible tax reduction proposals for Rhode Island businesses.

- The Chambers oppose any significant increase in business fees levied by the state, or city or town as allowed by the state.
- The Chambers oppose creation of separate tax rates for commercial/industrial and residential real estate.
- The Chambers support legislation prohibiting changes in depreciation schedules, retail and wholesale inventory tax rates, or business personal property tax rates, without complying with State of Rhode Island Open Meetings Laws.
- The Chambers support the restoration of effective tax credits or economic development initiatives, instituted to create, retain or expand employment opportunities in Rhode Island.

### **Rhode Island State Budget & Fiscal Policy:**

**T**he Coalition supports efforts to control the cost of state and local government spending.

- The Chambers oppose unnecessary increases in government spending, and support responsible decreases in government spending.
- The Chambers oppose efforts to eliminate effective tax credits or economic development initiatives created for Rhode Island businesses and citizens.
- The Chambers support legislation providing funding for and allowing full implementation of, a Tax Policy Office for the State of Rhode Island.
- The Chambers support legislation granting the governor a budget line-item veto.
- The Chambers support responsible changes to the State of Rhode Island Retirement and Benefit Plan laws that result in substantial savings for state taxpayers.

### **Health Care:**

**T**he Coalition supports legislative and regulatory reforms that ensure Rhode Island businesses and employees have access to affordable, quality health care.

- The Chambers support initiatives that promote workplace wellness programs, and place increased focus on improving the health status of employees.

- The Chambers oppose legislation establishing new health insurance coverage mandates without the establishment of a Health Insurance Mandate Review Commission, charged with measuring the fiscal and social impact of new mandates.
- The Chambers support responsible legislation fostering or improving the affordability of health insurance.

### **Business Protection & Tort Reform:**

**T**he Coalition will support and advocate for tort reform that is reasonable and effective.

- The Chamber opposes legislation that would institute damages against or provide that legal fees are paid for by, businesses that are not offered an opportunity to defend against litigation in a court of law.
- The Chambers support reasonable, meaningful medical malpractice reform.
- The Chambers support legislation tying interest applied to judgments to the consumer price index (cpi), while judgments are in the appeals process.
- The Chambers oppose legislation creating duplicate oversight for businesses already subject to state regulatory authority.
- The Chambers oppose legislation expanding the list of entities subject to class action legal proceedings.

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### **Workforce Development, Education, & Workplace Laws:**

**T**he Coalition supports measures ensuring competent, well trained and skilled workers.

- The Chambers support responsible investment in all levels of public education, designed to provide a high-caliber, affordable system that prepares students for entrance into the workforce.
- The Chambers oppose mandatory increases in minimum wage requirements.
- The Chambers oppose efforts to reduce the threshold dollar amount necessary for automatic implementation of Project Labor Agreements.

**Right to build/ Right to conduct business:**

**T**he Coalition supports the rights of businesses to build, and conduct business, in areas where the current planning, zoning, development and environmental laws or regulations have been met.

- The Chambers oppose any efforts to impede on businesses that meet the above laws or regulations.
- The Chambers support Sunday sales rights for businesses.

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**Environment & Energy**

**T**he Coalition recognizes the compromise(s) that must be made to balance economic development with the preservation of our environment, Narragansett Bay, and open space.

- The Chambers support responsible measures to protect the environment of the State of Rhode Island.
- The Chambers oppose legislation that requires businesses to bear the disproportionate cost of increases in delivery or utilization of public utilities.

**Remember: The Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce is *your* voice at the Rhode Island State House. If you have any concerns, questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us via the information at the end of this newsletter. Thank you for your continued interest in government affairs.**

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Thank you.