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THE CHAMBER FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY

## **Top BBA legislative priorities for 2020 include economic growth, workforce development legislation**

### **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BIRMINGHAM**, Ala. – February 3, 2020 – As the Alabama legislature prepares to convene tomorrow, Tuesday, February 4, the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) has released its state and federal legislative priorities for the coming year.

“The 2019 legislative session was a successful one for the Birmingham business community, and the BBA hopes to continue that momentum going forward into the 2020 session,” said Greg Curran, vice chairman of public policy for the BBA and chairman of the firm at Maynard Cooper Gale. “The passage of pro-economic development legislation like the Alabama Incentives Modernization Act, the Alabama Innovation Act and the Rebuild Alabama Act were all big steps forward for Birmingham, and we will continue to build off that success as we look to further grow jobs and create an inclusive economy in Birmingham.”

The BBA captured the 2019 legislative session in the [2019 Legislative Impact Report](#), which recaps what took place during the session and how it impacts the Birmingham business community.

This year, BBA’s [state legislative agenda](#) and [federal legislative agenda](#) both focus on four key areas of interest: Economic growth, research and innovation, infrastructure and workforce development.

Here are a few of the priority issues the BBA supports and will advocate for during the upcoming state legislative session:

- **Alabama Jobs Act:** The Alabama Jobs Act puts in place incentives that reward the creation of jobs and capital investment, incentivizes innovative business clusters and encourages Alabama-based companies to refurbish and upgrade existing operations. The current legislation is set to sunset unless reauthorized prior to its expiration on December 31, 2020, and the BBA supports the continuation and enhancement of this act.

- **Growing Alabama Tax Credit:** The Growing Alabama Tax Credit generates funding to help local economic development organizations develop building sites in order to attract business or industry to an area. Growing Alabama credits can also be awarded for funding of tech company accelerators, research parks, industrial parks, inland ports and intermodal facilities, and to create workforce marketing campaigns to attract STEM workers. The current legislation is set to sunset unless reauthorized prior to its expiration on September 30, 2020, and the BBA supports the credit's continuation and enhancement.
- **Historic Preservation Tax Credits:** The BBA supports and encourages state leadership to make permanent the tax credits for the rehabilitation, preservation and redevelopment of residential or commercial historic structures to stimulate private investment, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and job creation. The current legislation is set to expire in 2022.
- **Child Care Tax Credits:** Child care is a significant challenge for many Alabama families. Coupled with the need for 500,000 skilled workers in the next five years, it is possible to have substantial disruptions in workforce and long-term economic loss to the state's economy if child care needs are not addressed. The BBA supports child care tax credits for families, providers and educators not only to support workforce needs in an impactful way, but also to help bridge the gap between quality and accessibility for working parents.
- **Genomic Medicine Building:** The BBA supports the continued development of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's (UAB) Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Corner through a substantive investment in the Genomic Medicine and Data Sciences Building. This complex, once completed, will provide new research space for interdisciplinary biomedical research, including investigators from multiple schools working on common themes. The complex would house researchers studying medical informatics, personalized medicine, cybersecurity and the analysis of "big data." This is an important opportunity for the state to invest in new jobs and economic development in the Birmingham area.

A priority issue on the federal agenda is the Northern Beltline, which will resume construction after funding was secured in Congress by U.S. Senator Richard Shelby. The BBA supports the expeditious construction, full funding and timely completion of the Northern Beltline as an essential component of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS). The Northern Beltline project has long been a priority for the BBA and the regional business community because of the potential impact on economic development and jobs in the region.

"The Northern Beltline will enable us to compete for major economic development projects by providing interstate access in areas that are currently isolated from the national transportation system," said BBA Interim President and CEO Fred McCallum. "It is estimated that post-construction

benefits will include thousands of new jobs and a more efficient transportation system for people and businesses who create jobs. We are supported by strong leaders in Montgomery and Washington, like Governor Ivey and Senator Shelby, who understand the magnitude a transformative project like the Northern Beltline can have on the economy of our entire state.”

BBA public policy staff, the BBA’s public policy committee and the BBA’s Governmental Affairs Committee work to identify what matters most to the Birmingham region when crafting both the state and federal legislative agendas.

“Closely coordinated public policy and economic development is important to the success of Birmingham’s economy and quality of life,” said BBA Senior Vice President of Public Policy Waymond Jackson. “Our aim through identifying these legislative priorities is to narrow down what is most important to our region and to advocate, strategically, for the passage of legislation that grows our economy and creates access to opportunities for everyone.”

The Birmingham Business Alliance promotes economic growth in Birmingham, Jefferson County and throughout the seven-county metropolitan area. For more information about the BBA visit its website at [www.birminghambusinessalliance.com](http://www.birminghambusinessalliance.com).

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