



2021

★ FEDERAL ★

LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES



birmingham
businessalliance
THE CHAMBER FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY



Greg Curran,

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BBA Vice Chair of Public Policy

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“The Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) supports policies that drive innovation, encourage entrepreneurship, and promote regional job growth. As the Birmingham region rebounds from the impact of COVID-19, the BBA’s role in building a competitive workforce and creating a fertile environment for new economic development opportunities is critically important to the future of the region. The BBA is committed to being an advocate for pro-business initiatives at all levels of government, and our State and Federal Agendas consist of legislative priorities that reinforce a strong business climate.”



ECONOMIC GROWTH

TARIFFS IMPACTING THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The BBA joins leaders across the state of Alabama and other business associations in opposition to any tariffs on imported vehicles and automotive parts. The BBA encourages the Administration, Congress and the U.S. Department of Commerce to work together toward a solution that will not negatively impact the growing automotive industry.

MEDICAID

The BBA supports legislation that would direct the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to fund 100 percent of the cost when a state or locality chooses to expand Medicaid for the first three years of expansion. Currently, Alabama has missed the window and assumes 30 percent of costs associated with Medicaid. Under expansion, as it stands now, the state would only be responsible for 10 percent of the costs, with the federal government picking up the balance.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The BBA supports federal efforts to target federal resources in economically distressed communities to stimulate economic development through the Opportunity Zone program. The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council is working to expand federal resources and support for Opportunity Zone projects. In particular, the University of Alabama at Birmingham is proposing a biotech incubator that would fall under the Opportunity Zone program and would significantly benefit the Birmingham regional economy through increased jobs, new startup companies, and innovative research and development.

CORPORATE TAX RATE

The BBA supports maintaining the current corporate tax rate. A lower corporate tax rate reduces the cost of capital, which encourages companies to invest in new projects and ultimately leads to greater output and higher wages for the workforce. We oppose overly burdensome proposals, like a 15 percent minimum

tax on profits reported to the investor, that discourage companies from using tax breaks created by Congress to promote investment in important industries, such as renewable energy, manufacturing and essential public services like low-income housing.

UAB BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH CORNER

The BBA supports the continued development of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's 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 research 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.

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDING

The BBA supports efforts to provide additional financial support to local governments as they continue to navigate the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19.





RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS

The BBA supports sustained or increased funding levels for the federal agency and research and development budgets. Furthermore, the BBA opposes any stagnated funding that impedes research and development. Any decrease in federal funding would result in significant job loss in the Birmingham region.

PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

The BBA supports a well-thought out, uniform national privacy standard that protects the data and privacy rights of consumers, while allowing enough flexibility for the nation's diverse economy to continue to flourish. A system of 50 complex and confusing privacy standards would impede innovation, particularly among smaller businesses and innovators. Would-be "disruptors" will have to navigate the fine line between costly data compliance and business innovation, further tilting the scales in favor of larger, well-capitalized companies.



NORTHERN BELTLINE

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 BBA also supports continued 100 percent federal funding for the ADHS, the appropriation of funds over and above Alabama’s formula apportionment, and inclusion of the ADHS in any infrastructure proposal from Congress or the administration. The BBA encourages consideration of non-traditional funding solutions in order to accelerate completion of this transformational project through a mix of local, state, federal and public-private partnerships. The BBA opposes any effort to limit the amount of available funding or reduce the national priority status for the completion of the ADHS and this project.

BIRMINGHAM-JEFFERSON COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY

The BBA supports expanding the port and encourages the efforts of the Birmingham-Jefferson County Port Authority to obtain funding on the private, local, state and federal levels in order to improve safety, encourage economic development and bring jobs to Birmingham and surrounding areas. This includes but is not limited to grants and other funding streams.

HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT INVESTMENT

The BBA supports Congress dedicating additional revenues in support of highway and transit investment, such as a federal gas tax increase and other financially responsible investments, reforms and long-term solutions. In 2021, the Federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) will once again be insolvent unless Congress acts to address the revenue deficiency for the HTF in conjunction with any available legislative tax vehicle.

BROADBAND POLICY INITIATIVE

The BBA supports broadband policies that promote: (1) increased access to affordable broadband for all Alabamians; (2) the efficient deployment of advanced technology platforms; (3) continued investment and innovation to enhance deployment across Alabama; and (4) competition and choice for Alabama's businesses and residents. The BBA opposes public policy that promotes or leads to burdensome bureaucratic processes, government regulation of the Internet, and government-owned competition, all of which inevitably drives up costs for business and consumers in Alabama. Broadband is an important component of Alabama's infrastructure and the continued growth and diversification of Alabama's economy.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The BBA supports investments to maintain and improve the nation's water and wastewater infrastructure, which is vital to human health and our economy. This includes support for increased funding for the clean water and drinking water state revolving funds, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program, and relief funding for utilities that face challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BBA believes the authorization and funding of programs is essential to the development and deployment of smart water and wastewater technology to modernize systems and address water supply, quality, treatment, management or security issues.





WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EXPAND APPRENTICESHIPS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The BBA supports public investment in industry partnerships to help expand apprenticeships and build a skilled workforce to compete in today's global economy.

MODERNIZE YEAR-ROUND PELL GRANTS

The BBA supports modernizing Pell to be more demand-driven and responsive to employer skill needs while creating advancement opportunities for entry-level employees. The Pell Grant is a valuable investment in a better-educated workforce and a vital component to our nation's long-term economic strength. In 2017, Congress approved the restoration of year-round Pell. In order to make Pell Grants work for our businesses and employers, Congress should make short-term occupational certificate programs with a track record of success eligible for Pell Grants.

THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TAX CREDIT ACT OF 2017

The BBA supports the Workforce Development Tax Credit Act of 2017 or similar legislation to incentivize companies to train and hire apprentices. Talent development is vital to provide skilled workers for companies to help fill available jobs in our region.



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