



The Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce is an activist for an economic climate where businesses are able to prosper. On your behalf we work within our region, state, and nation to advocate policies that are consistent with the interests of the business community. An integral component of our mission is to provide leadership and advocacy on business related issues and to facilitate relationships with leaders at all levels of government.

The 94th Illinois General Assembly, because it's an election year, will likely be abbreviated and result in very little substantive legislative action. This year we anticipate that much of what will be discussed will favor populous appealing social programs. It will be important for businesses to let their representatives know about the impact proposed laws could have on their ability to grow, create jobs, and prosper in the state.

Of particular concern to the Illinois Quad City Chamber is legislation dealing with health care, and tax structure/state budget. Of ongoing interest to our business community are labor/employment and tort reform matters, which have a particularly significant impact on business.

The Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has adopted the legislative priorities within this document. Our intent is to take a unified voice, a common agenda, and a strong message to Springfield. We intend to have a regular presence in Springfield to remind our elected officials of the issues that are critical to our success as a community and our ability as a state to provide a profitable business environment.

We may need to call upon you during the 2006 Legislative Session to assist us in making our message clear. We may need personal testimony from you as business people to illustrate real life causes to the actions taken in our State Capitol. We encourage you to contact the Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce office at 309-757-5416 or email me at rbaker@quadcitychamber.com if you are willing to help us.

The formation of this Legislative Agenda and the political advocacy that will follow are just another example of how your company benefits from your partnership in the Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce. If you have any questions, please contact me at the above phone or e-mail.

Sincerely,

Rick L Baker, President/CEO



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Agenda Item 1: *Health care*

As a cost of doing business health care is an important consideration. It is estimated that health care benefits in Illinois are approximately \$25 billion annually. Controlling and/or reducing health care cost is, therefore, a major priority for employers throughout the state and Western Illinois. To this end the Illinois Quad City Chamber supports measures that will reduce the escalating cost of health insurance.

Agenda Item 2: *Taxes*

The state has relied on increased business fees to help balance its budget. This policy has sent the wrong signal to employers considering Illinois as a place to do business. Clearly, reforms are needed to reduce state spending and the burden imposed on employers to “bridge the gap” between income and expenses. Such measures should not, however, impede state resources for investments vital to the economy, such as infrastructure funding. To this end the Illinois Quad City Chamber supports initiatives that enhance Illinois’ image toward businesses and creates an environment attractive for business relocation and expansion.

Agenda Item 3: *Labor/Employment*

During the 2005 Legislative Session the Illinois business community helped pass historic changes to the Illinois Workers’ Compensation Law. Illinois employers will be joining those of other states as having statutory provisions to help control workers’ compensation medical costs. In addition, the law was revised to include elements to combat fraud, streamline the adjudication of claims, and increase benefits for workers seriously injured.

Illinois workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance coverage cost employers a combined \$4 billion each year. An Illinois based employer’s ability to compete for skilled, high wage jobs depends on whether these programs can deliver much needed benefits at a reasonable cost to employers. To this end the Illinois Quad City Chamber supports further reforms to the workers’ compensation system to ensure that those employees requiring benefits receive them at the least cost and administrative burden possible to employers.

Agenda Item 4: *Tort Reform*

Working off of the momentum gained in the 2004 election of reform candidate Lloyd Karmeier to the Illinois Supreme Court, business and medical providers scored a stunning legislative victory with the passage of meaningful medical liability reform legislation. The litigation reform legislation also includes caps on non-economic damages. The Chamber believes that this reform will help keep doctors and hospitals in Illinois, and make health care more affordable to job providers and their employees.

Over the past several years a number of states have improved their competitive position for attracting businesses and jobs by enacting significant tort reform legislation. Clearly, additional tort reform measures are needed in Illinois to promote jobs and prosperity. To this end the Illinois Quad City Chamber supports comprehensive tort reform measures including, but not limited to, reforms related to venue, non-economic damage awards; joint and several liability; and punitive damage protections for businesses.