

The Lincoln Chamber's key State policy objectives for 2022:

**Statewide Tourism And Recreational Water Access and Resource Sustainability (STARWARS)** – The STARWARS Committee was established as a special legislative committee in May 2021 to study tourism, water access and economic development. The study defined a vision for three of Nebraska's natural resource areas meant to serve as a catalyst for more tourism, economic development, population growth, job growth, and resource sustainability. In January 2022 state leaders unveiled a vision for several transformational initiatives for the Lower Platte River Area, Niobrara River Area, and Lake McConaughy Area. The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce and our affiliate organization are interested and eager to be involved with advancing big ideas such as these and will be engaged in further review as details and plans are more fully developed. We are keenly aware and will be protective of interests related to water wells and of companies involved in sand and gravel mining that must be protected and fully appreciated. The Chamber, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development all have interests in these "big idea" initiatives and are committed to working with state leaders and other stakeholders.

**ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS** – Returning to strong economic and population growth is essential for the competitiveness of our state and the success of our recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Substantial funding provided to the state under the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act will dramatically assist our statewide efforts. The Lincoln Chamber will continue to work with all who are interested in growing jobs and investments. The Lincoln Chamber will prioritize support for legislative proposals that enhance economic growth, workforce development, and training, develop strategies for Mega Sites & future growth, and build our innovation capacity. We welcome everyone to our state and support equal opportunity for all people. We oppose discrimination in the workplace, including discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. There should be no room for discrimination of any kind in the workplace or anywhere else. We will work to facilitate the LPED strategic plan for the Lincoln region by supporting public policies and legislative proposals that align with these strategies. Additionally, the Chamber will continue to collaborate with the State Chamber, the Greater Omaha Chamber and other organizations and institutions that support expanded statewide broadband, a more competitive tax system and tax incentives for Nebraska. The impact of recently enacted federal tax reforms should be fully understood and considered as we evaluate state tax policy changes. We also must coordinate state COVID-19 recovery responses with federal programs to fully capitalize on these efforts.

**TAX RELIEF & SPENDING RESTRAINT** – The Lincoln Chamber continues to support lowering the tax burden. Nebraska has moved in the right direction recently in national tax rankings. Tax relief must include a focus on spending restraint determined by local officials; state and local governments must set priorities that align with taxpayers, and local control is an important aspect of responsive government. Without spending restraint from all levels of government, so called tax relief via state spending turns into a tax shift that does nothing to lower our overall tax burden. Nebraska's income taxes are among the highest in the region and this undermines our competition for high quality jobs and investments, as well as talent retention. We will work to protect Lincoln taxpayers and our economy from the undue burden of tax shifts. The comprehensive tax reform proposal recently enacted by the Legislature outlines a sensible and pragmatic approach, senators should be cautious as they review new proposals that promise an easy fix or dramatic changes. The Chamber supports fast-tracking both the scheduled

social security tax reductions and the ratcheting down of the top corporate income tax rate as sound tax policies that already won support last year and can be accelerated. Prudent and financially sound public pension fund management will also be essential to maintaining our state's solid financial footing.

**ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE** – The Lincoln Chamber will prioritize efforts to protect the Build Nebraska Act and safeguard the security of the HWY Trust Fund. The Chamber will continue advocacy and coalition building to secure state funds related to Lincoln's South and East Beltway projects. The Chamber believes there is a significant funding gap for road infrastructure needs across the state, which has been at least partially assisted by funding provided under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The Lincoln South Beltway, which is programmed for funding under the Build Nebraska Act, has enormous public safety, road system efficiency, and economic growth benefits. The Chamber will work cooperatively with coalitions to protect against any legislative efforts to undermine the Build Nebraska Act, and will support innovative legislative proposals aimed at accelerating road system investments.

**STATE BUDGET & GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY** – The Chamber will expect efficiency from all levels of government and prioritize support for state spending initiatives to those that leverage private investment, assist with the workforce development needs of business, promote public/private partnerships, and enhance competitiveness for job and investment growth. We will support state leaders who work to promote overall fiscal restraint. State leaders should continue to be prudent in their protection and use of the Cash Reserve Fund. The Lincoln Chamber supports efforts to reform government and make better use of business principles in the operations and evaluation of its effectiveness. The Lincoln Chamber will lend support to government accountability and efficiency efforts.

**REGULATORY REFORM** – The Chamber recognizes the necessity of regulations to ensure workplace safety and protect public health. We firmly believe that including the views of business helps keep compliance costs in check and results in an improved regulatory system, which is of particular benefit to small businesses. The Chamber will lend support to regulatory relief efforts and improved regulatory analysis in the rulemaking process.

**CVB MISSION SUPPORT** – The Chamber will help the Convention and Visitors Bureau on state issues it identifies as top legislative priorities to assist in bringing more visitors, events, and conventions to the Lincoln area. With the 2013 opening of the Pinnacle Bank Arena and continued build out of the Haymarket - including the Lincoln Youth Complex ball fields - the Lincoln Chamber will work in coordination with the CVB to capitalize on opportunities for growing our market and protecting & enhancing local attractions.

**SUPPORT MILITARY SERVICE & ASSETS** – The Lincoln Chamber will support proposals that assist with attracting, retaining, and encouraging individuals who have a status or background of military service and who desire to build a career or business in Nebraska. Our Military Affairs Committee will continue to reach out to employers and military personnel to enhance understanding and build cooperation. The Chamber will be a partner in helping to protect Military Assets important to economic stability and growth in our community.

**Adopted: February 10, 2022.**