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Hendricks County Chambers of Commerce Public Policy Foundational Principles

(Adopted by each of the 4 Chambers' Boards of Directors September 2022)

The purpose of the Hendricks County Chambers of Commerce Public Policy Committee is to develop educational opportunities to support business priorities. We work to connect business members to legislators and public policy initiatives impacting Hendricks County businesses and community development.

GENERAL BUSINESS POLICIES

Business Autonomy/Free Market/Deregulation

Hendricks County Chambers of Commerce (HCCC) supports the ability of businesses to operate with limited government interference. This includes the ability of employers, who are best equipped and informed, to decide how any guidance and recommendations fit into their operations, with their employees, and customers.

Business Rationale: Indiana has created a business-friendly climate when it comes to low cost of living, favorable tax climate, etc. However, the increased push to interfere in private business operations and decisions is an overreach of government authority. Hoosier businesses value their ability to operate with limited government interference.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Regional Collaboration

HCCC supports regional collaboration between local governments and organizations to improve economic development, recruit new and grow existing businesses, attract, and retain a strong workforce, incentivize quality-of-place projects, and support strong fiscal partnerships.

Business Rationale: Hendricks County is a part of a global economy and business is not constrained by regional boundaries. Local chambers, economic development corporations, schools, hospitals, and local governments should work together to develop projects that help our communities, while minimizing waste and duplication. We support collaborative strategies and incentives to accomplish this.

Attainable Housing

HCCC supports policies and government incentives that promote attainable housing for all income earners in a growing workforce and including senior housing options. We support a holistic planning and development strategy, connecting attainable housing to workforce recruitment and retention, placemaking and quality of life. We also recognize and support the importance of local government structures, policies and public input in the planning and development process.

Business Rationale: Hendricks County is a growing community and businesses want the opportunity for current and prospective employees to live, work and play here. To continue and

sustain this growth, we must attract talented workers. A limited housing inventory for workers at all income levels, can stunt workforce growth, causing our community to lose out on economic development opportunities. Increasing the inventory of housing to support all income earners means more residents can join and stay in our community.

Moreover, providing local governments a wide variety of tools in their economic development toolkit to foster attainable housing alongside quality of place efforts such as transit, parks, and mixed-use development, will support residents' upward mobility. A diverse inventory of attainable housing with upwardly mobile residents will strengthen businesses and the financial health of our community.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/LABOR

Child Care

We support opportunities to provide quality and accessible childcare options for all Hoosier children with a focus on income-limited working families. When employees can rely on quality, safe, local, and affordable childcare services, our businesses employ a stronger workforce.

Business Rationale: Employers recognize that states and communities investing in quality childcare options have stronger workforces and higher educational attainment. Availability of quality childcare options enables parents to become more productive employees. States and communities that invest in the availability of quality childcare options are recognized as communities that attract and retain employees.

Workforce Incentives

We support diverse and creative policies to incentivize employers and employees to help ease the workforce crisis in Indiana.

Business Rationale: Workforce development is one of the top priorities for employers across our state – it is imperative that we have a talent pipeline to fill jobs as well as retain highly-qualified/skilled workers. HCCC supports policies that may include, but are not limited to, tax credits, career counseling, remote workforce incentives, tuition assistance, licensure reciprocity, investment in trainings, work-based learning opportunities, etc.

EDUCATION

Career Pathways

HCCC supports career pathways in the K-12 system to ensure a seamless transition to post-secondary education and/or to the workforce. We support educational programs that allow students to achieve workforce credentials while at the same time obtaining their high school degree. In addition, we support partnerships with K-12 schools to foster college and career readiness, including incentives for companies to offer internships, experiential learning, and pre-graduation/early recruiting programs.

Business Rationale: In this job market, a high school degree is no longer sufficient for high wage jobs. Utilizing career pathways in the K-12 system will allow students to tailor their graduation requirements to align to their post-secondary goals – whether it be to further their education, join the military, or immediately enter the workforce. In addition, we support partnerships with K-12 schools to foster college and career readiness, including incentives for companies to offer internships, experiential learning, and pre-graduation/early recruiting programs.

Early Childhood Education

HCCC supports public-funding for quality early childhood education for income-limited Hoosier families.

Business Rationale: It is important that Hoosier children have the best chance at a quality early childhood education to ensure that they are prepared for further schooling. Studies show children who are ready for kindergarten are more likely to be reading at the third-grade level by the end of third grade, and more likely to graduate high-school.

Career and Technical Education/STEM

HCCC supports emphasizing career and technical education (CTE), and science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the K-12 educational system to fill this growing job market. In addition, we believe that it is important to retain STEM graduates from Indiana's institutes of higher education.

Business Rationale: Indiana is recruiting technology-related companies to Central Indiana that are providing high-demand and high-wage jobs. Retaining STEM graduates from Indiana's higher education institutions will increase our talent work pool and encourage these industries to locate in Indiana. HCCC also believes that strong STEM programming should be a part of K-12 education to educate our future workforce and keep them in Indiana upon graduation.

INFRASTRUCTURE/TRANSPORTATION

Local Roads and Streets Funding

We support increasing funding for local roads and streets, and support equitable re-allocation and distribution of transportation tax funds to the localities where generated. This support includes providing flexibility to local governments in the decision-making issues that come with local infrastructure (including financing options, design, and construction). HCCC supports inter-county collaboration and planning efforts to maximize commerce mobility and funding.

Business Rationale: Mobility is critical to all business operations. Our local infrastructure must be reliable and safe to operate our existing businesses and recruit new business opportunities. HCCC supports an equitable distribution of state-allocated transportation funds to maintain our roads and bridges. It is important that local governments have the tools and funding necessary to build the infrastructure that best supports the needs of Hendricks County's economic development.

HEALTH CARE

Health Care Costs

HCCC supports public policy that encourages transparency in health care costs to encourage better consumer education and decision making in health care choices. We support enabling choices through free-market health care coverage options.

Business Rationale: Employers in Indiana spend over \$6B a year in health care costs. As such, it is important that employers can utilize the free market and have choices when it comes to making health care benefit decisions for their companies. In addition, ensuring the removal of barriers to health care benefits and increasing transparency will help to drive down costs.

Mental Health

HCCC supports policies that encourage the development and implementation of mental health and addictions support systems. We support the coverage of mental health and addictions

services in health care plans and efforts to increase accessibility and availability of these professional services within our region. Mental health issues within our workforce, homes, and especially in vulnerable populations create obstacles to achieving optimal success at work, school, and other areas. Addressing mental health will support our region's quest to attract new companies and residents more competitively as we become better equipped to provide for these needs.

Business Rationale: Employers are now finding health and wellness efforts as a part of their workforce development, economic development, and community development strategies – and mental health is a critical piece to the puzzle. Mental health issues within our workforce and homes affect employees and their productivity and well-being. We support employers being given the tools to provide wrap-around services and support systems and to aid in their employees' mental health and well-being.