

Texas Association of Business



National Affairs Priorities 2010-2011

Revised, January 2010

DISASTER RECOVERY

Disaster recovery. Support initiatives to improve federal emergency aid for disaster response, reimbursement to responders and recovery funding. Support the determination and application of fair allocation methods to establish eligibility for federal recovery funds.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Accountability. In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, support a system that measures the progress of students as well as the performance of school districts. Support the idea that, in return for increased federal spending, school districts must be effective in turning out students who are better prepared. Support a system that provides a mechanism to shut down or restructure school districts who continue to fail through local action. Oppose efforts to govern school districts through federal intervention.

Cross-Border educational development. Realizing that Texas is the gateway to Mexico, request that Congress allocate dollars to promote skills on both sides of the border. Migrant workers and their children should be provided English language acquisition in order to communicate and function in our increasingly multi-national business and social environments. We should develop a strategy to move citizens in border areas from menial to meaningful jobs.

Federal block grants. Support efforts to fund state workforce programs through federal block grants with maximum flexibility on the use of the funds.

Funding. Give flexibility to local school districts to allocate federal funds to the areas of greatest need. Oppose measures to place demands on the specifics of spending federal monies.

Math and science initiatives. Support and fund the Administration's algebra readiness and advanced placement initiatives to improve math and science performance in public schools.

Testing. Support annual testing of students to ensure that school districts are providing the necessary tools for the success of students in the basics of reading, science and math. Oppose any measures to eliminate testing students on basic skills.

University-based research. Following recommendations issued by the U.S. Council on Competitiveness and the National Academies Report entitled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, strengthen the climate in the U.S. for innovation and encourage Congress to provide additional funding for university-based research in the physical sciences. This includes further increases in the budget for the National Science Foundation and other engineering-related research initiatives.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Oppose attempts to amend the Federal Arbitration Act or prohibit or restrict the right of employers to make binding arbitration or other ADR programs a condition of employment, or to increase the burden of regulations on ADR.

Collective Bargaining. Oppose federal efforts to unify state collective bargaining laws for public safety officers employed by states or local governments.

Devolution of Federal programs to the States. Support transferring control over federally-mandated programs like unemployment insurance to the States, thereby reducing employers' tax burdens and increasing state responsibility for workforce-related programs.

Employee Free Choice Act. Oppose efforts that would eliminate an employee's right to vote in a private, Federal government-supervised election during organizing campaigns; and oppose efforts to require an arbitrator to produce a first contract binding on the employer and employees if the union and employer could not negotiate and mediate a contract within a short time period.

Union dues check-off. Oppose efforts to allow public employees or require private employers to subsidize or promote labor unions or similar organizations through payroll collection of dues and contributions.

Fair Labor Standards Act Reform. Support efforts to reform wage and hour laws by allowing more flexibility for employers and employees in hours worked during a pay period before mandating overtime pay.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Oppose efforts to lower the threshold for FMLA coverage from the current 50 employees that would subject even more employers to the complicated and burdensome requirements of that law, and oppose any initiatives to require employers to pay for FMLA leave with unemployment insurance taxes.

Forewarn Act. Oppose efforts to expand the requirements of the Worker adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act to 90 from 60 days in the event an employer orders a plant closing or mass layoff.

Fraud control. Support legislation to allow the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to hire outside contractors on a pay-for-performance basis to assist in efforts to detect and remedy unemployment benefits fraud.

Healthy Families Act. Oppose efforts to mandate a one-size-fits-all paid sick leave package that could result in significant costs for employers as well a loss to employees who prefer other benefits rather than sick leave.

Minimum wage. Oppose efforts to increase the minimum wage, since doing so would have a detrimental effect on business, especially small business.

OSHA Penalties. Oppose efforts to unnecessarily increase regulatory burdens and increase fines for employers. Support efforts to provide protection from liability for employers required to comply with OSHA requirements that may conflict with environmental or other safety requirements.

Unemployment savings accounts (USA). Support fundamental changes in the unemployment insurance system that would abolish traditional federally controlled unemployment insurance programs in favor of establishing individual USAs for employees that would be available if needed for unemployment, training, or as a supplement to retirement income.

Regulation

General Regulatory Policy. When a marketplace is governed effectively by market dynamics, the government should seek to minimize regulatory burdens. Any policy guidelines established by government should ultimately seek to empower customers, not regulators. Policy makers should maintain a regulatory climate that does not impose hidden taxes on employers and consumers through excessive rules, fees and fines and should continue to support reducing excessive regulations in order to promote, rather than impede, economic growth, investment and job creation.

Internet Regulation. Oppose the imposition of any new regulatory regime on broadband Internet access service providers under the guise of “net neutrality.” Government intervention in the broadband marketplace through the imposition of restrictive policies, such as measures to control how providers price, market and manage their products and services, would deter innovation, reduce competition and thwart continued investment in and enhancement of broadband networks. Given these turbulent economic times and the enormous cost of building out broadband infrastructure, the United States cannot afford policies that would hinder private-sector investment in this critical technology.

Credit Regulation. Oppose the broad, overreaching efforts in Congress to establish the Consumer Protection Financial Agency (CFPA) or similar agency that would have inappropriately broad authority to regulate financial instrument or consumer financial product including mortgages, credit cards or other personal loans.

ENERGY

Domestic Energy Production. Support efforts to maximize the development and production of domestic energy sources to improve energy security and create incentives for diversification of the domestic energy market and job growth in the domestic energy

industry. The federal government should remove all obstacles to development of offshore energy sources that allow some states to benefit from the supply of products derived from offshore production in other states while unreasonably prohibiting local or regional access to offshore energy resources. Oppose any unreasonable restrictions on development of new energy resources, such as shale natural gas resources, based on unsound or unproven technical justification of environmental impact.

Clean energy development. Encourage expanded federal research and development programs for clean energy technology with a high priority toward (1) development of low-emission coal-fueled technology, (2) technically feasible carbon storage and sequestration that is consistent with Texas geology and maximizes the potential for ancillary recovery of other energy resources and (3) other advanced emission controls related to energy development and production.

Energy diversity. Support a federal energy program based on (1) increasing the diversity and sustainability of fuel and energy sources, including the use of oil, natural gas, coal, wind, solar, nuclear, biomass and waste-derived power, developed and made available in an environmentally safe manner; (2) encouraging energy conservation and rational energy efficiency policies and (3) promoting the development and use of renewable energy sources that are technically feasible and capable of competing in an open market. Oppose any Congressional efforts that would require the use of specific fuels for industrial sources.

Renewable Energy. The federal government should provide support for research and development of renewable energy sources and technology, including storage technology for sources such as wind and solar, with the specific goal of bringing to the market energy sources that can compete with more traditional and dependable energy sources without distortions in markets or unreasonable cost increases to any class of consumer. Any effort to mandate specific utilization of renewable sources in the supply mix that does not clearly and adequately protect against unfair and unreasonable cost impacts to consumers should be opposed.

Electricity. Support full and fair competition and customer choice in the electricity industry that will provide for nondiscriminatory open access to facilities for wholesale and retail transactions. The federal government should rely on market forces to provide adequate and reliable energy supplies. Mandates on the type of energy used in electric power generation should be prohibited because they discriminate among energy options, inhibit efficient markets and harm consumer, investor and public interests. The government should also avoid subsidies, loan guarantees, or indemnification incentives that favor particular energy options. A level playing field, without discrimination among fuels, technologies or industry participants, leads to the most efficient and effective energy market.

Energy Efficiency. Support energy efficiency measures that are uniformly applied, technically feasible and cost effective. Oppose energy efficiency measures that impose unfair or discriminatory requirements on manufacturers, result in unreasonable costs to consumers or negatively affect competitiveness in national or international markets.

Tax and capital formation. Maximize the full development of our energy resources by providing laws and regulations that ensure adequate capital formation.

Pipeline and transmission capacity. The federal government should assist and encourage the construction of additional pipeline and transmission capacity from producing regions to consuming regions to meet growing demand and maintain the integrity of existing infrastructure in order to continue to protect public safety.

Refinery capacity. Encourage the development of a new refining capacity in the U.S. and ensure that increasing environmental regulations must take domestic refining capacity and energy security into consideration.

Smart Grid Technology. The term “smart grid” refers to the use of modern computer, meter and communications technology to improve intelligent and efficient operation of the electric power grid and enable consumers to better manage consumption. The proper development and use of smart grid technology can result in more efficient use of available power resources and reduce the environmental impact of power generation and use. The expansion of smart grid technology should be supported, where cost effective, and the use of existing communications infrastructure encouraged where it can be demonstrated to reduce cost or enhance reliability and security of the grid.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Climate and Energy Policy. Support federal efforts for more research into the causes of climate change. Congress’ attempts to craft climate and energy legislation should be limited to increasing the production of domestic energy sources in the most environmentally protective manner that is economically practical. Any greenhouse gas limitations should be tied to those reductions that derive from energy efficiency, development and utilization of clean energy technology and market based incentives for changes in energy production and consumption. Greenhouse gas limitations must not adversely affect the competitive position of U.S. businesses in world markets. Other than programs designed to transition from hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants consistent with the Montreal Protocol, cap-and-trade proposals for greenhouse gas regulation intended to affect energy markets or prices should be opposed. Oppose any mandatory greenhouse gas emission limits that do not fairly apply to all global emission sources or which cannot be shown to have any significant effect on actual greenhouse gas conditions. Congress should act to assert its constitutional role to enact law and move to prohibit EPA from regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act.

National Air Quality Standards. Oppose any further efforts by EPA to impose more stringent ozone or other pollutant National Ambient Air Quality Standards until efforts to meet existing standards are demonstrated to be achieving no progress in air quality improvement. Support reform in the scientific review process for air quality standards to ensure that any proposed changes must be based on more clear and certain justification of risk reduction and protection of public health. Support legislation and Congressional oversight to ensure that federally-regulated emission sources are required to institute

emission reductions contemporaneously with and commensurate with the reductions imposed upon sources regulated by the states in attempting to meet federal air quality standards.

EPA Regulatory Actions. Oppose any efforts by EPA to arbitrarily rescind or re-interpret established regulatory policy and guidance or to interpret rule making authority not expressly authorized by law. Support efforts to require EPA to limit the number and significance of proposed rule changes and regulatory actions to ensure that all statutory requirements for analysis of potential cost and environmental impact are fully complied with and that all affected parties have both appropriate notice of proposed actions and adequate opportunity to assess and respond to EPA initiatives.

Air Quality Control Technology. Oppose efforts by EPA to re-interpret best available control technology to require changes in fuel source for combustion sources or any alternatives that represent fundamental changes in design or purpose of a proposed emission source not related to emission controls.

Toxicology and Risk Assessment. Oppose any efforts by EPA to impose more stringent environmental standards based on uncertain scientific evidence or solely on statistical correlations in the absence of clear demonstrations of cause and effect relationships between exposure and health effects. Support efforts to require a more rigid and thorough peer-reviewed process for establishing any new environmental exposure standard or screening level. Oppose any effort to utilize as enforceable regulatory standards a conservative screening level established for the purpose of guiding further regulatory actions or permitting decisions.

Coal Combustion Wastes. Oppose any efforts by EPA to reclassify coal combustion wastes or by-products as hazardous waste or impose any additional material storage or use requirements that are not based on a clearly demonstrated and documented risk to public health.

Recycling. Oppose legislative efforts to implement mandatory take-back programs for consumer electronics, appliances or other products that unfairly place the cost burdens on manufacturers and/or distributors. Oppose limitations and restrictions on the types of materials contained in electronics and appliances produced or sold in Texas. Support voluntary take-back programs, and support research programs that would lead to increased recycling, refurbishment and reduction of hazardous materials in landfills. Oppose recycling incentive programs that create enforcement liabilities for landfill operators who receive materials that are safely disposed in modern compliant landfills.

Environmental justice. Oppose efforts by the EPA to use environmental justice concerns to prevent industrial and business development of an area based upon its racial and economic makeup, and support the granting or renewal of permits on environmental and health-based standards.

Water quality. Support efforts to promote sensible federal regulation of water quality, particularly requirements related to the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program, based on technically sound, practical and economically achievable methods.

Tax exempt financing of pollution control projects. Support legislation to establish federal programs for tax-exempt financing for environmental improvements to air and water quality in order to encourage the early adoption of necessary technology while easing the cost of compliance for Texas businesses.

HEALTH CARE

Access and quality. Support increasing access and choice of health care programs by promoting the need for market-driven health care policies. Encourage growth and reform in the individual marketplace. Increase funding and loan-forgiveness programs for primary care medical residencies and reallocate existing residencies based on population distribution.

Employer liability. Prevent needless increases in cost and litigation, by way of the expansion of employer liability, by opposing any legislation that creates or expands causes of action against employers and insurance carriers for medical negligence or harm incurred by health care providers. Support providing independent, third-party reviews of medical claims denials.

ERISA. Support efforts to preserve employer rights and employee health care system benefits of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). Oppose any legislation that would jeopardize the benefits of millions of Americans who receive their existing health insurance coverage through the employment-based system. Ensure that employers retain the right to craft their health care coverage without the burden of federal and state regulations.

Health care liability. Support legislation to curb the use and abuse of class action lawsuits in the health care system. Increase the momentum to fight for better tort reforms in the realm of health care, including caps on medical malpractice for doctors and more succinct tort reforms overall.

Information technology. Support the implementation of Health IT initiatives to reduce medical costs and enhance care in rural, isolated and underserved communities. Easier access to personal medical records and treatment options allows patients to interact with physicians before health issues become more serious and more expensive to treat.

Interstate insurance policies. Support the interstate marketing of individual health plans and allow insurance to be purchased across state lines. Support efforts to allow citizens to purchase insurance policies, which have been approved by the insurance boards of any state and contain adequate consumer disclosure, without imposition of individual, state insurance mandates, therefore increasing options for citizens in purchasing health care policies.

Mandated benefits. Oppose any efforts to mandate specific benefits in health care coverage that significantly increase costs to employers and employees and eliminate the ability of employers and employees to choose the level of benefits they elect to pay for.

Market Flexibility. Ensure market-based solutions and approaches are used in our health care system. Support making coverage more affordable by monitoring and opposing health insurance regulations that increase the costs and undermine the concept of a free market for contractual medical services without contributing to better access and better quality of care for patients.

Medical information. Support improvements in the quality of care and consumer comparisons by managing medical information and profiles of providers for health care purchasers and their employees, including the collection and sharing of cost and quality data. Monitor HIPAA implementation and activities to ensure patient privacy and to protect the proper use of medical information and technology.

Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). Empower individuals to better handle their share of health care costs and improve access to coverage through the expansion of HSAs and eliminate market restrictions on the accounts. Improve the variety of accounts that can be offered as well as the carryover provisions. Continue to protect employers' abilities to utilize HSAs. Reject proposals that would over regulate and institute onerous restrictions.

Medicare / Medicaid reform. Support costs containment in both Medicare and Medicaid. Support the expansion of Medicaid Managed Care throughout the nation. Strengthen and improve both federal programs using market-based solutions.

Prescription drug coverage. Support the standards already set in place for electronic prescriptions. Oppose plans that give too much power to government bureaucrats. Business should promote plans that include private-sector benefit plans for prescription drug coverage and oppose plans that jeopardize the financial health of Medicare or try to increase payroll taxes.

Patient safety. Ensure patient safety and control costs by reducing the number of medical errors. Promote affordable, quality and safe health care.

Self-Referral. Remove all safe harbors for self-referrals to in-office ancillary services and physician owned hospitals. Support amending title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exclude certain advanced diagnostic imaging services from the in-office ancillary services exception to the prohibition on physician self-referral. The amendment would close an in-office "loophole" to the self-referral law that would exclude advanced imaging, including MRI, CT and PET scans. TAB supports this additional regulation because it will yield a very high return on the cost of regulation measured in improved quality of patient care.

Tax credits. Develop alternatives for individually owned health coverage such as allowing above-the-line deductions for individuals who pay their own health insurance premiums (including premiums for long-term care insurance). Create forward-funded, refundable tax credits for the purchase of private health coverage for low-income individuals and families, and accelerate the 100% deduction of health insurance for the self-employed.

Transparency. Increase the disclosure of providers and carriers in pricing and performances. Support finding ways to make private health care coverage more affordable and to provide fair and adequate reimbursements for care because the absence of real prices creates perverse incentives on both sides of the market and needs to be fixed.

IMMIGRATION

H1B Visa Caps. Global access to highly skilled technical workers is critical to the U.S. economy. While efforts to better prepare and encourage American students into math, science and engineering-related degrees are under way, American employers need to be able to hire highly educated professionals with special skills in order to compete effectively. In particular, employers should have access to the foreign nationals earning advanced degrees at universities in the U.S. who, in some fields, now earn the majority of degrees. TAB advocates: (1) continued access to H-1B visas and (2) support for legislation to exempt foreign nationals who have received masters or Ph.D. degrees from universities in the U.S. from the H-1B cap.

Immigration Reform. Support comprehensive immigration reforms that include the following three criteria important to the Texas business community:

1. Build an immigration system that allows enough legal immigration to meet employer needs.
2. Create the ability for undocumented workers residing in the U.S. to obtain legal status.
3. Create a reliable system for employers to quickly verify the legal status of job applicants without burdening employers with higher compliance costs or liability or shifting enforcement obligations from the government to employers.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Bilateral investment and tax treaties. Support new investment and tax treaties to protect investor rights and avoid double taxation in key foreign markets.

Border environmental quality. Continue support for cooperation and monitoring of environmental standards along the Texas/Mexico border to achieve a proper balance which is equitable for Texas employers and border communities.

Committee on Foreign Investment in the US (CFIUS). Defend America's traditional openness to foreign investment and oppose changes to the interagency Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States that could dilute its focus on national security or deter desirable foreign investment in the United States.

Export controls. Oppose regulations that limit U.S. exports of widely available technology products, shutting U.S. companies out of key foreign markets and increasing red tape without achieving any real national security objectives.

Farm- and Fishing-Related Business Financing. Support expanding Farm Credit System financing to businesses that farmers and aquatic harvesters depend on for support of their farming or aquatic operations.

Global sourcing. Oppose barriers to international business erected at the federal or state level that curtail global sourcing.

Non-tariff barriers. Press foreign regulators to ensure a level playing field for U.S. companies and free competition in their domestic markets through judicious use of competition policy, intellectual property law, technical standards, government procurement rules, and investment requirements.

Promote free markets globally. Lay the foundation for market-oriented reform and private enterprise in emerging markets by building institutions that support open societies and a culture of entrepreneurship.

Trade facilitation. Work to make the flow of international commerce faster, cheaper, and more efficient through reforms of customs and port administration.

Trade promotion authority. Congress should re-authorize the President's Trade Promotion Authority that expired on June 30, 2007, to permit negotiation of new free trade agreements in an efficient and timely manner and restore the competitive advantage that has been lost to other countries.

Cross-Border Transportation. Support improved highways, ports of entry and other infrastructures that facilitate trade, tourism and other legitimate cross-border traffic between Texas and Mexico; support development and funding of "international trade corridors" throughout Texas to accommodate current and future transportation demands resulting from the North American trade expansion.

Unilateral sanctions. Overturn unilateral sanctions on foreign markets that shut U.S. workers, farmers, and companies out of foreign markets without achieving their stated objectives.

World Trade Organization (WTO). Build support among government and business leaders to open international markets for agricultural products, manufactured goods, and services through the WTO's Doha Development Agenda as well as Russia's accession to the WTO.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Homeland security. Support attempts to receive more federal dollars to offset the increasing needs for homeland security for all Texas ports and related waterways and for the border with Mexico.

Secure Border Initiative Network (SBInet). Support funding for the SBInet program within the Dept. of Homeland Security to help secure the border between Texas and Mexico by transforming border control through technology and infrastructure.

PRIVACY

Privacy. Oppose legislation and regulations that impose costly and unnecessary obligations on companies who use information such as financial, medical, and social security numbers.

TAXES AND SPENDING

Tax Cut Rollbacks. Oppose any comprehensive rollback of the tax cuts enacted under the Bush administration and support making these tax reductions permanent, particularly the estate and gift tax. Support further rollback or reduction of taxes and tax rates, including marginal tax rates and capital gains.

Capital investment. Support efforts to ensure a faster cost recovery of capital investment.

Alternative minimum tax. Support long-term solutions to the problems created by the individual and corporate alternative minimum tax.

Corporate income taxes. Support efforts to reduce corporate income taxes to increase business investment and profitability.

Capital gains and dividends. Oppose any rollback of reduced tax rates on capital gains or dividend income. Support reforms to lower capital gains and dividend income tax rates and make provisions permanent.

Global competition. Support tax code reforms and trade provisions that will improve the ability of U.S. companies to compete fairly in global markets. Support federal tax

rates that will be more consistent with those in other countries, remove disincentives for domestic re-investment of foreign income.

Tax-deferred savings. Support efforts to expand and enhance opportunities for tax-deferred savings instruments.

Tax and regulatory policy. Support efforts to reform U.S. tax policy to create incentives for economic growth and foster, rather than penalize, technology investment. Oppose any attempts to generate additional revenues from businesses through revenue offsets or other indirect mechanisms such as limitations on deferral of income, changes in foreign tax credit rules, limitation on certain inventory rules, windfall profits on oil, changes to marginal tax rates, or restrictions on deferred compensation.

Research and experimentation tax credit. Since its creation as a temporary measure in 1981, the research and experimentation tax credit has been extended thirteen times. The tax credit should be made permanent so that companies willing to invest in research and development to create jobs and expand businesses can undertake more certain long-range planning efforts.

Employment tax credits. Support permanent authorization of the Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work tax credits in order to provide continuity and more certainty to these programs to increase employment of disadvantaged workers and improve local economies.

Federal unemployment tax. Support efforts to end what was intended to be a temporary federal unemployment tax surtax, repeal accelerated payment of federal unemployment tax and undertake a comprehensive review of the unemployment tax program to determine its effectiveness, fairness and value.

Federal funding. Support state policies and programs that maximize the receipt and use of federal matching and other funds for state purposes. Support federal efforts that return a fair and equitable share of federal funds to states based on their contributions. Oppose federal efforts to establish and enforce conditions, including changes in state law, for the receipt of any state's fair allocation of federal funds.

Federal fiscal policy. Support efforts to prohibit deficit spending and limit spending increases to some rational index, such as growth in personal income.

Privatization. Encourage privatization of government functions where it can be shown that private, for-profit entities competing for opportunities can perform more efficiently and reduce overall government costs.

Research and development. Support efforts to increase federal support of research and development to ensure that the U.S. remains a world leader in technical innovation and Texas receives an appropriate share of support commensurate with our standing as an economic leader and exporter of technology.

Government Contract Withholding. Support the repeal of Section 511 of the Tax Reconciliation Act that mandates that federal, state, and local governments withhold 3 percent from payments for goods and services. This unprecedented withholding mandate will affect all government contracts as well as other payments, such as Medicare and certain grants, is totally unrelated to any actual tax liability of a business providing goods or services, and will add significant costs to both businesses and all levels of government.

TORT REFORM

Tort reform. Encourage the appointment of judges who will support rational limits on damage awards in all cases, including employment-related litigation, and support legislation to strengthen and extend state and federal Supreme Court rulings regarding the reasonableness of punitive damage awards in all types of cases.

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Oppose attempts to abrogate business contracts or threats to the availability of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as arbitration. Oppose attempts to impose binding arbitration on labor disputes between employers and employees.

Asbestos. Support litigation reform for asbestos and other industrial particulates.

Class action lawsuits. Reform class action rules.

Federal preemption. Support the use of federal regulatory authority to preempt state common law claims for damages that are inconsistent with legal reform. Preemptions allows companies doing business in other states to operate under one set of rules rather than having to accommodate varying and perhaps even conflicting rules in each state.

Frivolous lawsuits. Discourage frivolous lawsuits.

Joint and several liability. Limit the application of joint and several liability.

Mold Claims. Support reasonable Congressional solutions to address mold claims and the effect on the availability and affordability of insurance.

Punitive and non-economical damages. Reform rules pertaining to punitive and non-economic damages as well as contingency fees.

TRANSPORTATION

Aviation fees. Oppose changes in fees for general or commercial aviation which would increase the financial burden on businesses.

Aviation funding. Modernize the nation’s antiquated aviation infrastructure by reauthorizing federal aviation programs and ensuring that revenues from the Aviation Trust Fund are used for their intended purposes.

Infrastructure. Continue to strengthen our national transportation infrastructure by ensuring full funding for ISTEA/TEA-21/TEA-LU and the authorization of aviation and ports and waterways infrastructure programs. Also insure that each donor state gets at least 95% back from the federal Highway Trust Fund. Support increased annual funding for Corps of Engineers projects.

Rail Transportation. Support efforts to improve rail transportation by providing fairness and openness in the negotiations between railroads and their customers over rates and service to ensure that U.S. manufacturers competing in global markets can cost-effectively transport raw materials and finished products.