



## **LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2023**

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The Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce's (GHWCC) strives to empower and inspire women to make the Houston region the best place to live, work and grow a business. We believe that continued success throughout the region requires continued economic development and job growth. In order to achieve both, we must continue to invest in education, transportation and infrastructure, healthcare and energy policies that improve and enhance the quality of life for those living the greater Houston region. We are proud to be the fastest growing women's Chamber in America, and the premier voice for women in the Greater Houston area.

### **PRIORITIES**

#### **BROADBAND**

Equitable access to broadband will provide economic opportunities to all Texans. The GHWCC supports continued state investment to address the digital divide and serve local communities. Access to high speed broadband of at least 100/20Mbps is a powerful tool for the delivery of essential services such as education and healthcare, offers increased opportunities for women's empowerment, and helps foster the social development of communities. The Chamber is in support of efforts currently underway to allocate a portion of the surplus to broadband (HB9) and supports SB1238 which will create greater areas of eligibility for grant funding to rural areas.

#### **FLOOD MITIGATION**

The Legislature made a strong commitment in 2019 to strengthen local communities and make the state more resilient by creating the Flood Infrastructure Fund. The GHWCC supports significant re-investment in the Flood Infrastructure Fund.

#### **HEALTH CARE**

COVID placed tremendous strain on frontline healthcare workers resulting in workforces shortages in critical areas. The GHWCC supports state programs and investment to attract the best and brightest to the profession. The GHWCC supports continued investments in state's mental health workforce and supports extension of Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women from 60 days postpartum to 12 months post-partum. The GHWCC supports HB3188 to ensure cancer patients across Texas have access to innovative biomarker testing to help identify specific treatments that target their cancer needs.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION TEACHER WORKFORCE SHORTAGE**

Public schools are facing a teacher workforce shortage. The GHWCC supports targeted efforts to address this shortage and attract high-quality teachers to the classroom.

#### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Expand economic opportunity to meet the goal of making Texas the best state for women-owned businesses by promoting opportunities for Texas women including resources, education, and innovation.

# ISSUES

## ARTS

The GHWCC supports HB323 providing funding for the Texas Commission for the Arts, especially to support our performing art community.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Competitive economic development tools are critical to bringing new businesses to the region and growing our economy. The GHWCC supports the creation of a new school property tax abatement program that makes our state attractive to emerging industries and ensures our long-term competitiveness. The GHWCC supports re-authorization of the Chapter 312 property tax abatement program available to cities and counties.

## ENERGY TRANSITION

Texas is poised to lead the energy transition and safeguard our place as the global energy leader. The GHWCC supports removing regulatory roadblocks and creating certainty for those investing in the future of Texas energy.

## HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

The University of Houston is the region's flagship public institution and continues to make meaningful strides in terms of student success and research funding. The GHWCC supports increasing the state's investment in the University of Houston.

## LOCAL ISSUES

The judicial system in Harris County is broken and not serving the needs of the region. The GHWCC supports policies that would help to alleviate the felony court case backlog.

## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CREDENTIALS

The GHWCC supports an all-of-the-above approach to training and upskilling the region's workforce to ensure leading technology and innovation companies have access to a robust talent pipeline. The GHWCC supports continued investment in public education, preservation of high-impact programs, and effective accountability measures.

## TEXAS COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE FINANCE

Community colleges are essential to educating, certifying, and training the workers needed to keep our economy strong. The GHWCC supports student-focused and industry-led recommendations. We recommend a special emphasis on certifications and training that include state licensure, an industry-recognized credential or completing a certificate or degree that has a multitude of employers supporting the curriculum and technical lab training.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Aligning workers' skills with the needs of industry is key to economic growth.