

Successes help employers, jobs and the economy

CAPITOL WATCHDOG

Each year CalChamber tracks more than 3,000 legislative proposals on behalf of member businesses.

GRASSROOTS ACTION

Comments from employers yield results. See hot issues at www.calchambervotes.com.

ABOUT US

CalChamber is the largest, broad-based business advocate, working at the state and federal levels to influence government actions affecting all California business. As a not-for-profit, we leverage our front-line knowledge of laws and regulations to provide affordable and easy-to-use compliance products and services.

2011 Major Victories

Fighting for Jobs, Creating Certainty in an Uncertain Economy

The California Chamber of Commerce is the voice of California business, expert at speaking for pro-job policies and advising employers on how state laws and regulations will affect the workplace. We track more than 3,000 legislative proposals every year, sounding the alarm when a bill will hurt employers and the economy, and working to win support for legislation that will help the jobs climate. Policymakers listen to CalChamber advocates, knowing that we speak for more than 13,000 member businesses employing a fourth of the state's private workforce and reflecting the diversity of the California business community.

Further emphasizing our message are the thousands of individuals who use our Web-based grassroots center, www.calchambervotes.com, to make their views known to their elected representatives. Each year, website visitors use the grassroots center to send some 200,000 letters about state and federal issues affecting business operations.

Read on to learn how CalChamber advocacy in 2011 helped employers. See the Advocacy Return on Investment sheet for estimates of employer savings on some of these victories.

Stopping 29 of 30 'Job Killer' Bills

The skill of CalChamber policy advocates, joining forces with other business groups and pro-jobs legislators, prevented all but five "job killer" bills from passing the Legislature. The Governor vetoed four of the five "job killers." Below is a sampling of "job killers" that won't become law. More information at www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.

- **Stopped costly workplace mandates**, such as an automatic minimum wage increase (AB 10); changes increasing workers' compensation costs (AB 375, AB 1155); protected classification for employees who use medical marijuana (SB 129); and elimination of secret ballot elections for agricultural workers (SB 104).
- **Prevented expansion of employer liability** by proposals to add more reasons for taking family and medical leave (AB 59); mandate paid sick leave (AB 400); and elevate bereavement leave to the same level as the right to be free from racial or gender discrimination (AB 325).
- **Kept lid on inflated liability costs** by advocating veto of a bill undermining judicial discretion (AB 559); securing amendments to legislation that could have led to new shakedown lawsuits against businesses (SB 111); and killing a bill that would have undermined enforcement of arbitration agreements in contracts (AB 1062).
- **Blocked new barriers to economic development**, such as a requirement for certain contractors to retain the employees of a former contractor (AB 350); a proposal requiring tax credits to sunset (SB 508); a "split roll" property tax (AB 448); and a multitude of hidden and specific tax hike proposals (AB 832, AB 1130, AB 1239, SB 237, SB 535, SB 653, SBX1 23).
- **Halted expensive, unnecessary regulatory burdens**, including a ban on the use of polystyrene foam food containers (SB 568); and a complex, unworkable health care rate regulation process (AB 52).

Promoting Expansion of Trade Opportunities for California Goods and Services

Part of broad-based coalitions whose five-year campaigns secured congressional passage of free trade agreements with Korea, Panama and Colombia, estimated to increase U.S. exports by billions of dollars and improve the jobs climate.

Helping Control Workers' Compensation Costs

Backed proposals signed into law to lower pharmaceutical costs, lower frictional costs in the workers' compensation system, streamline the process, establish a fee schedule for vocational experts and ensure contractors have coverage (AB 378, AB 335, AB 1426, AB 1168, AB 397).

Improving Education

Supported legislation signed into law that will increase high school graduation rates, improve the college and workplace readiness of those graduates and train teachers to better prepare California's students to compete in a global economy by emphasizing education programs that provide students with real-world experience and rigorous coursework to help them engage and excel (SB 611, SB 612).

Conforming State to Federal Law on Dependent Health Care

Supported conforming state to federal law regarding treatment of employee premium payments for adult children health care coverage as non-taxable income (AB 36).

Preventing Electricity Cost Increases

Stopped eight-year extension of a tax (public goods charge) on electricity ratepayers in the territories of the investor-owned utilities (AB 724, SBX1 28).

Preserving Employer Ability to Use Payroll Cards

Secured veto of bill essentially prohibiting financial institutions from charging fees related to the use of payroll cards, thereby imposing a de facto ban on the product and eliminating employers' ability to offer this cost-beneficial option for paying wages to employees (SB 931).

Preventing Interference with Employment Contracts

Opposed and secured veto of proposal that would have limited parties' right to contract by characterizing any non-California choice-of-forum clauses and/or choice-of-law clauses in employment contracts as void and unenforceable, unless additional compensation was paid to include such provisions (AB 267).

Clarifying Leave Requirements

Sponsored legislation signed into law to clarify the requirements of paid bone marrow and/or organ donation leave, to provide employers with certainty as to how this leave should be implemented (SB 272).

Keeping Lid on Mortgage Costs

Stopped a \$20,000 per foreclosure tax that would have been used for purposes unrelated to the foreclosure and increased the costs of homeownership for new borrowers (AB 935).

Reforming Regulatory Process

Worked for legislation to reform the regulatory process by requiring an economic analysis of all major regulations at the beginning of the regulatory process, thus providing more transparency and better data on which to base selection of most cost-effective regulatory alternative (SB 617).

Protecting Victims of Identity Theft

Backed urgency bill to authorize restitution for expenses for three years to monitor an identity theft victim's credit report and for the costs to repair the victim's credit (SB 208).

Protecting California Agriculture

Provided farmers and ranchers an additional tool to help prevent vertebrate pests from destroying valuable California agricultural products by allowing the use of carbon monoxide for vertebrate pest control purposes (SB 634).

Promoting Food Safety

Supported urgency legislation clarifying which food facilities are subject to food safety training rules and who can offer certification courses (SB 303).