

## 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](http://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.

# 2015 Major Victories

## Building the Foundation for a Better California

The California Chamber of Commerce is the voice of California business, expert at promoting pro-job policies and advising employers on the practical impact of state laws and regulations in the workplace. We track more than 3,000 legislative proposals every year, speaking up 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 policy advocates, knowing that we represent more than 13,000 member businesses that together employ a fourth of the state's private workforce and reflect the diversity of the California business community.

Adding strength to our message are the thousands of individuals who use our Web-based grassroots center, [www.calchambervotes.com](http://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 2015 helped employers. See the Advocacy Return on Investment sheet for estimates of employer savings on some of these victories.

## Stopping 18 of 19 Job Killer Bills

The skill of CalChamber policy advocates, joining forces with other business groups and pro-jobs legislators, prevented 18 of 19 job killer bills from becoming law as originally introduced. Below is a sampling of job killers stopped or amended before they passed the Legislature. More information is available at [www.calchamber.com/jobkillers](http://www.calchamber.com/jobkillers).

- **Increased labor costs**, including a one-size-fits all scheduling mandate (AB 357); automatic minimum wage increase (SB 3); significant expansion of the California Family Rights Act (SB 406); and significant increase in workers' compensation costs (SB 563).
- **Increased fuel costs**: an arbitrary petroleum use cutback (SB 350).
- **Tax increases**: giving local governments new authority to enact special taxes, including parcel taxes, by lowering from two-thirds to 55% the vote required for approving new taxes (ACA 4); a targeted tax on certain beverages (AB 1357); increased tax rate for certain companies (SB 684); and a split roll property tax (SCA 5).
- **Increased burdensome environmental regulation**, including limits on in-state energy development (AB 356 and AB 1490); new unsubstantiated emission reductions (SB 32); and an unworkable hazardous waste permitting process (SB 654).
- **Increased health care costs**: ability for state regulators to unilaterally alter large-group rate changes (SB 546).
- **Economic development barriers**: stifling the development of mobile application technology (SB 576).
- **Increased unnecessary litigation costs**: jeopardizing access to credit for home mortgages (AB 244); precluding mandatory employment arbitration (AB 465); and mandating California-only labeling for sugar-sweetened drinks (SB 203).

## Removing Barriers to Job Creation

Secured approval of urgency legislation giving employers a **limited opportunity to cure technical violations in an itemized wage statement** before being subject to costly and devastating litigation, so an employer can devote its financial resources to expanding its workforce (AB 1506); and a bill **expediting and reducing the cost for certain roadway repair and maintenance projects** by continuing to exempt them from the California Environmental Quality Act (AB 323). More information at [www.calchamber.com/jobcreators](http://www.calchamber.com/jobcreators).

## Building a Workforce to Match Employer Needs

- Supported adoption of legislation allowing high school students to take college-level coursework to avoid the need for remediation and expand access to college-level career technical education courses (AB 288).
- Backed update of state workforce development law to align with federal law (AB 1270).
- Filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of a landmark trial court decision striking down laws related to teacher tenure and dismissal that disadvantage low-income students and contribute to the state's shortfall of highly skilled workers (*Vergara v. California*).

## Protecting Access to the Courts

Supported veto of bill to put constraints on the courts' ability to become more efficient as they try to effectively manage reduced appropriations (SB 682).



### Clarifying Employer Responsibilities

- Worked extensively with author to obtain employer-friendly amendments to clean-up legislation to the 2014 **paid sick leave** bill, including grandfathering in paid time off policies in effect before the new law, options for different sick leave accrual methods and options for calculating the appropriate rate of pay for paid sick leave (AB 304).
- Negotiated amendments to legislation clarifying basis for an employee to take leave under existing **school activities leave** law (SB 579).
- Secured substantive amendments to **wage theft** bill to alleviate concerns of employers trying to comply with the law (SB 588).
- Worked with author to make bill requiring electronic filing of **unemployment insurance** tax returns less onerous than originally proposed (AB 1245).

### Fostering a State Capitol Environment that Makes Bipartisan Solutions Possible

Candidate elections team helped pro-jobs, education reform candidate win a key Senate race, adding to the ranks of lawmakers willing to give consideration to employer concerns.

### Supporting Employer Rights

Supported veto of bill to limit an employer's due process rights to seek an appeal of an Agricultural Labor Relations Board order and require the employer to post a bond for the entire economic cost of the order (AB 561).

### Keeping Lid on Workers' Compensation Costs

- Supported veto of bill to expand workers' compensation coverage to some injuries occurring outside the workplace (AB 305).
- Backed creation of prescription medication formulary to ensure injured workers receive appropriate medications and to decrease dispute-drive delays and reduce costs in workers' compensation system (AB 1124).
- Joined labor and attorneys in supporting legislation to clarify current law to ensure no injured worker is refused benefits based on immigration status (SB 623).
- Filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a case that upheld one of the cost-saving reforms from 2012—the imposition of the lien activation fee that helps sustain the system (*Angelotti Chiropractic, Inc. v. Baker, et al.*).

### Controlling Health Care Costs

- Stopped coverage mandates that would have increased employer premiums (SB 190, SB 289).
- Supported legislation signed mid-year to extend funding for program to provide the Legislature with valuable independent analyses of medical, financial and public health impacts of proposed health insurance mandates (SB 125).
- Blocked new targeted taxes on employer health insurance (SBX2 14, ABX2 19, ABX2 4).

### Reducing Unnecessary Requirements

- Backed bipartisan state legislation creating additional conformity between state and federal tax law, thereby easing accounting, recordkeeping and filing requirements for businesses (AB 154).
- Supported veto of plan to create expansive new notification requirements from employers to individuals who are not employees in order to solve a narrow concern with variance applications for elevators (AB 578).
- Won defeat of proposal to mandate double pay for almost all employees who worked on Thanksgiving (AB 67).

### Winning Safe Harbor for Employers with Gender Equity Pay Bill

Negotiated legislation placing in statute what existing case law requires employers to do, including safe harbor language so that employers can avoid unnecessary litigation when there are legitimate reasons for pay differences. (SB 358)

### Improving Management of California Water Supply

- Supported follow-up legislation to the landmark 2014 groundwater management law to improve judicial proceedings in comprehensive adjudications of groundwater rights without changing the law or existing water rights.
- Stopped misguided proposals to increase the excise tax on water use, publicize a business' water and energy use and require labeling of agricultural products irrigated with cleaned wastewater from oil fields (SB 789, AB 1520, ABX2 14).

### Expanding Affordable Housing

- Supported designating state Department of Housing and Community Development as state agency responsible for administering federal housing funds to ensure those monies will be used for their intended purpose—helping close the gap between the supply and demand of affordable housing.
- Backed legislation providing rental housing assistance to formerly incarcerated individuals to help reduce recidivism by using savings accumulated as a result of Proposition 47.

### Limiting Liability for Employers

- Filed a friend-of-the-court brief in a case that led to a pro-employer unpublished appellate court opinion that on-call rest periods are lawful (*Jennifer Augustus, et al. v. ABM Security Services, Inc., 2nd District Court of Appeal*). The case is currently pending at the California Supreme Court.
- Backed veto of proposal expanding liability for operating a drone above property (SB 142).
- Supported signing of safe harbor for innovative vision care centers (AB 684).
- Backed veto of bill to prohibit employers from obtaining relevant information important in the hiring process, with little benefit to the applicant and increased risk of litigation to the employer (AB 1017).

### Maintaining Balance Between Privacy, Innovation

- Secured amendments to make data breach legislation more workable for businesses (SB 570, AB 964).
- Supported modernization of digital surveillance laws to provide clarity to business about when and how government can gain access to electronically stored consumer information (SB 178).

### Opening Export Opportunities for California Businesses

- Supported renewal of trade promotion authority, which helps boost U.S. exports and create jobs.
- Supported reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank to 2019, enabling California and U.S. companies, large and small, to turn export opportunities into real sales that help maintain/create jobs.
- Supported renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences, which saves California companies millions of dollars each year.
- Supported extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), helping support millions of dollars in California exports to AGOA nations.