

Successes help employers, jobs and the economy

CAPITOL WATCHDOG

Each year, the CalChamber tracks close to 3,000 legislative proposals on behalf of member businesses.

IMPACT CALIFORNIA

By speaking out, employers can make a difference. See hot issues at www.impact-california.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.

2023 Major Victories

Creating a More Affordable California

The California Chamber of Commerce is the voice of California businesses of all sizes, expert at promoting pro-jobs policies and advising employers on the practical impact of state laws and regulations in the workplace. We track close to 3,000 legislative proposals each 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.

Strengthening our message are the numerous individuals who use our web-based action center, www.impact-california.com, to express their views to their elected representatives. Each year, many website visitors use the center to send letters about state, federal and international issues affecting business operations.

Read on to learn how CalChamber advocacy in 2023 helped employers. See the **Advocacy Return on Investment** sheet for estimates of employer savings due to some of these victories.

Stopping 15 of 19 Job Killer Bills

CalChamber policy advocates, supported by other business groups and pro-jobs legislators, prevented 15 of 19 job killer bills identified this year from becoming law as originally proposed. Below is a sampling of job killers stopped or amended to remove the more onerous provisions. More information at www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.

- **Unemployment insurance for striking workers.** Secured veto of increase in unemployment insurance taxes to subsidize striking workers (SB 799).
- **Expansion of employment litigation.** Earned veto of proposal exposing employers to costly litigation under the Fair Employment and Housing Act (AB 524).
- **Tax hikes.** Stopped massive tax increases on all forms of personal property or wealth (AB 259, ACA 3); increase in corporate tax rate to 10.99% (SB 220).
- **Housing ban.** Stopped proposal preventing local governments from approving housing permits (AB 68).
- **Arbitrary greenhouse gas target.** Stopped arbitrary change in state greenhouse gas reduction goal that would have forced 17 million gas-powered cars off the road in the next 10 years (SB 12).
- **De facto ban of warehouses.** Defeated setback requirement for all new or expanded logistics use facilities and creation of new private right of action (AB 1000).
- **Employer speech ban.** Stopped likely unconstitutional proposal to chill employer speech about religious and political matters, including unionization (SB 399).



Dampening Energy Price Increases

- Stopped misguided attempt to revamp the state's greenhouse gas program that would have led to increased gas costs (AB 9, SB 12).

Helping Small Businesses

- Won extension of small employer family leave mediation program (AB 1756)

Enhancing Water Supply Needed to Sustain California Economy and Jobs

- Backed new law improving ability to store water during storms by integrating forecast-informed reservoir operations into water supply operations (AB 30)
- Supported new law requiring state to plan for creating 10 million acre-feet of new groundwater recharge storage by 2028 (SB 659).
- Stopped effort to delay progress on a project to modernize California's water system (SB 687).
- Stopped increased liability risks from restrictions on water available for food products and new groundwater well permitting process (AB 429, AB 1563).

Improving Access to Broadband Services

- Secured amendments to legislation to encourage equal access to broadband, streamlining deployment of broadband infrastructure and allowing higher speed internet to be provided to more Californians (AB 414, AB 965).
- Stopped bill that would have led to reduced broadband access and less investment in California (AB 1714).

Protecting Access to Critical Packaging

Stopped ban on critically needed packaging used for products like over-the-counter medicines and to extend the shelf life of food products (AB 1290).

Preventing Costly Litigation

- Stopped special worker benefits from being enshrined in the California Constitution; nuisance lawsuits under the guise of tax enforcement; overly broad mandates on use of automated decision tools and Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA penalties); increased liability risks for energy companies for unproven illnesses attributed to living near wellheads; liability for good-faith errors related to considering conviction history of an applicant or employee (SCA 7, AB 259, AB 331, SB 556, SB 809).
- Supported enactment of flight crew exemption from overly rigid state meal and rest break rules (SB 41).

Reducing Upward Pressure on Rising Health Care Costs

Stopped health care mandates for fertility treatment coverage; allocation of insured's out-of-pocket expenses; drug coverage; prescription drug cost sharing; medical equipment (SB 729, AB 874, SB 427, SB 873, AB 1157.)

Protecting Use of Arbitration

As the result of a CalChamber lawsuit, the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that arbitration can continue to be used as an efficient forum in resolving disputes by employees and employers in California. The invalidated law, AB 51, sought to prohibit employers from requiring employees to sign agreements to arbitrate any disputes (*Chamber v. Bonta*).

Winning More Time for Companies to Comply with Privacy Laws

A CalChamber lawsuit led to a ruling in which the Sacramento Superior Court agreed that the California Privacy Protection Agency (CPPA) must delay enforcement of any individual regulation for a one-year period following the date the regulation goes into effect. The ruling provided some certainty and basic fairness for California businesses as they work to comply with the complicated mandates called for in Proposition 24, the 2020 initiative (California Privacy Rights Act) that expanded and revised the negotiated legislation (California Consumer Privacy Act) originally enacted in 2018 in lieu of a competing initiative effort that was eligible for the ballot. (*California Chamber of Commerce v. California Privacy Protection Agency*)

Improving Workplace Safety

- Secured amendments to bring workplace violence bill, including training and logging of workplace violence incidents, in line with Cal/OSHA proposal and to remove infeasible requirements (SB 553).
- Sponsored webinar to explain the new workplace safety law requirements to employers.
- Backed requirement for California's 10 largest transit districts to collect and publish data on street harassment that occurs on public transit systems with the intent of improving rider safety on those systems (SB 434).

Helping Tourism Industry Continue Recovery from Pandemic

Secured amendments to ensure workability of proposal requiring refundability of hotel and short-term rentals for 24 hours after purchase; and clarifying and excluding governmental fees and taxes from second proposal related to price clarity for hotels and online bookings (SB 644, AB 537).

Strengthening International Trade Relationships

- Hosted forums throughout the year to provide opportunities for CalChamber members to interact with trading partner representatives— including ambassadors, foreign dignitaries and consular corps members — and renew or gain trade contacts.
- Together with the California Diplomacy Foundation, co-organized and participated in the March 2023 trade mission to Japan led by Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development Director Dee Dee Myers.
- Promoted participation in and supported the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) inter-governmental forum in San Francisco in November 2023, bringing together representatives of 21 economies from around the Asia-Pacific to collaborate on the shared goal of creating a more open, resilient, sustainable, and peaceful future for the people of the world's most dynamic region.